CHAPTER 8

UNESCO'S LIST OF WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN INDIA

The list of World Heritage Sites is compiled by the *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation* **(UNESCO)** through the **World Heritage Committee** according to the provisions of the World Heritage Convention, which was established in **1972**.

To access online video related to this chapter, scan this QR code

World Heritage Sites are designated by UNESCO for having cultural, historical, scientific or other forms of significance. The sites are either cultural or natural heritage or under mixed category.

As of July 2023, a total of 1157 World Heritage Sites (900 cultural, 218 natural, and 39 mixed properties) exist across 167 countries. **Italy** has the largest number of World Heritage Sites (58) to date.

As of July 2023, India has 40 World Heritage Sites declared by UNESCO (32 cultural, 7 natural and 1 under mixed category).

The World Heritage Convention

The World Heritage Convention is one of the most important global conservation instruments. **Created in 1972**, the primary mission of the Convention is to identify and protect the world's natural and cultural heritage considered to be of **Outstanding Universal Value**. The Convention is governed by the **World Heritage Committee**.

World Heritage Committee

The World Heritage Committee is the **governing body on World Heritage**. It is responsible for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. It is an **inter-governmental committee** which comprises representatives from 21 State Parties selected through election for a six-year term. The Committee generally **meets once a year**.

The **World Heritage Committee** performs the following functions:

- Selects the sites to be listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger,
- Defines the use of the World Heritage Fund and
- Allocates financial assistance upon requests from States Parties.

World Heritage Committee is aided by **three advisory bodies**, namely, the **IUCN, ICOMOS** and **ICCROM**.

Criteria for Selection

The nominated sites must be of *outstanding universal value* and should meet **at least one** of the **10 mentioned criteria** listed below:

1. Represents a masterpiece of human creative genius.

2. Exhibits an important interchange of human values over a span of time, or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental art, town-planning or landscape design.

3. Bears a unique or exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilisation which is living or which has disappeared.

4. An outstanding example of a type of building, architectural, or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates a significant stage in human history.

5. An outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use or sea-use which is representative of a culture or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change.

6. It is directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.

7. Contains superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance.

8. An outstanding example representing major stages of the Earth's history, including the record of life, significant ongoing geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features.

9. An outstanding example, represents significance of ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems, and communities of plants and animals.

10. Contains the most important and significant natural habitats for in situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal values from the point of view of science or conservation.

Please Note: *The first six criteria are related to cultural sites and the remaining four are related to natural sites.*

Legal Status of Designated Sites

Once a site is declared as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, it is accepted as prima facie evidence that such a site is culturally sensitive and warrants legal protection pursuant to the Law of War under the Geneva Convention, its Articles, Protocols and Customs, together with the other treaties including the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and the International Law.

Article 53 of Geneva Convention *promulgates:*

PROTECTION OF CULTURAL OBJECTS AND PLACES OF WORSHIP: Without prejudice to the provisions of the 'Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict of 14 May 1954' and of other relevant international instruments, it is prohibited:

- *to commit any act of hostility directed against the historic monuments, works of art or places of worship which constitute the cultural or spiritual heritage of people;*
- *to use such objects in support of military effort;*
- *to make such objects the object of reprisals.*

UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India

As of July 2023, in India, UNESCO has declared **32 cultural sites, 7 natural sites and 1 under mixed category** as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The 32 cultural sites have been explained in detail below:
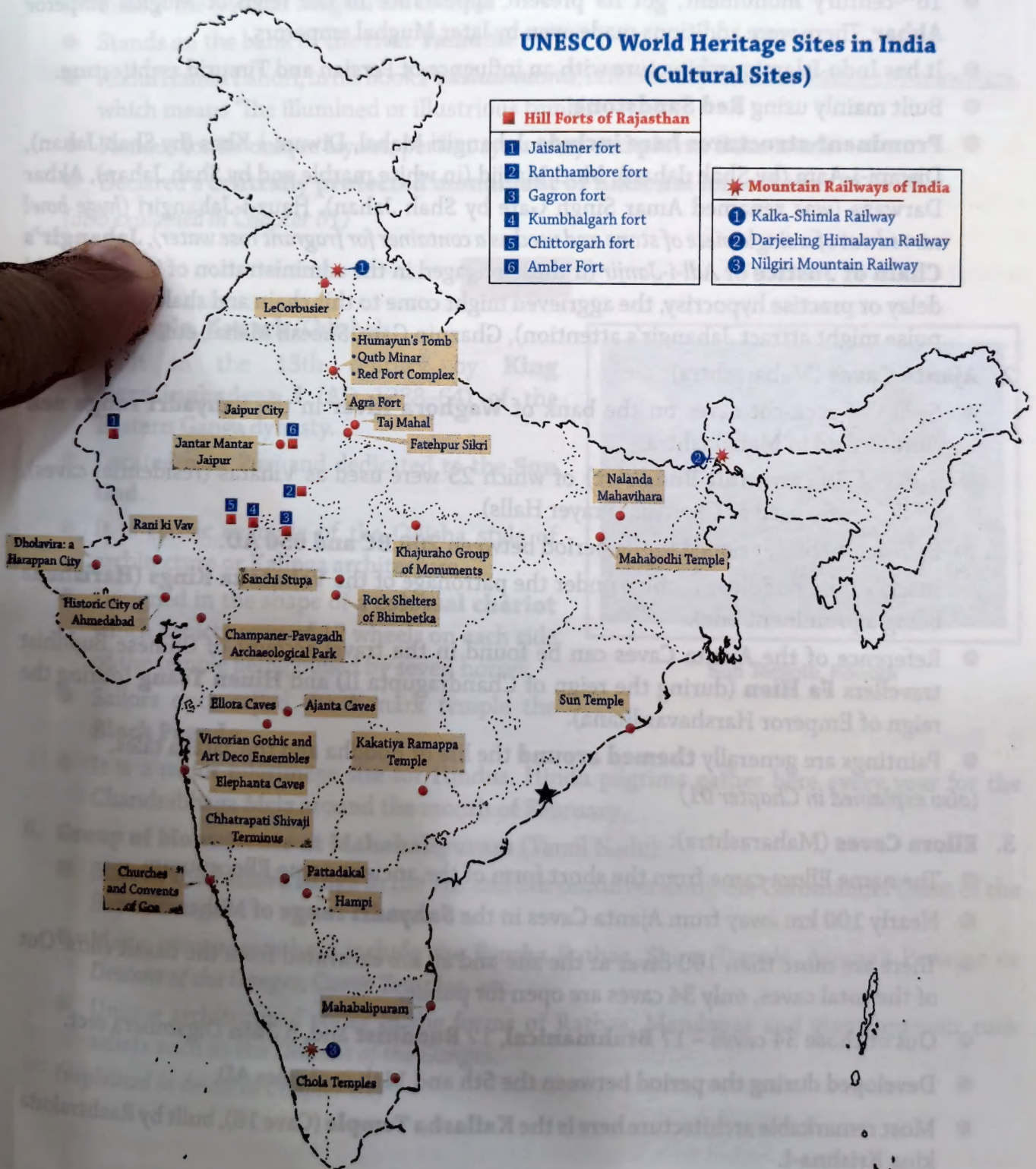
UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India (Cultural Sites)

■ Hill Forts of Rajasthan

1. Jaisalmer fort
2. Ranthambore fort
3. Gagron fort
4. Kumbhalgarh fort
5. Chittorgarh fort
6. Amber Fort

★ Mountain Railways of India

1. Kalka-Shimla Railway
2. Darjeeling Himalayan Railway
3. Nilgiri Mountain Railway

LeCorbusier

- Humayun's Tomb
- Qutb Minar
- Red Fort Complex

Agra Fort

Jaipur City

Taj Mahal

Fatehpur Sikri

Jantar Mantar Jaipur

Nalanda Mahavihara

Rani ki Vav

Khajuraho Group of Monuments

Mahabodhi Temple

Dholavira: a Harappan City

Sanchi Stupa

Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka

Historic City of Ahmedabad

Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park

Ellora Caves

Ajanta Caves

Sun Temple

Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles

Kakatiya Ramappa Temple

Elephanta Caves

Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus

Churches and Convents of Goa

Pattadakal

Hampi

Mahabalipuram

Chola Temples

Cultural Sites declared between 1983–2021

1983

1. **Agra Fort** (Uttar Pradesh):
   * 16th-century monument, got its present appearance in the reign of Mughal emperor **Akbar**. There were additions made even by later Mughal emperors.
   * It has Indo-Islamic architecture with an influence of Persian and Timurid architecture.
   * Built mainly using **Red Sandstone**.
   * **Prominent structures here include** Jahangiri Mahal, Diwani-i-Khas (by Shah Jahan), Diwani-i-Aam (by Shah Jahan), Moti Masjid (in white marble and by Shah Jahan), Akbar Darwaza (was renamed Amar Singh Gate by Shah Jahan), Hauz-i-Jahangiri *(huge bowl carved out of a single piece of stone and used as a container for fragrant rose water)*, **Jahangir's Chain of Justice** or *Adl-i-Janjir* (if those engaged in the administration of justice should delay or practise hypocrisy, the aggrieved might come to this chain and shake it so that its noise might attract Jahangir's attention), Ghaznin Gate, Sheesh Mahal, etc.

2. **Ajanta Caves** (Maharashtra):
   * Series of rock-cut caves on the bank of **Waghora River** in the **Sahyadri range** near Aurangabad in Maharashtra.
   * Total of 29 caves **(all Buddhist)** of which 25 were used as Viharas (residential caves), while 4 were used as Chaityas (Prayer Halls).
   * Believed to be developed in the period between **200 BC and 650 AD**.
   * Inscribed by Buddhist monks, under the patronage of the **Vakataka Kings** (**Harishena** being a prominent one).
   * Reference of the Ajanta Caves can be found in the travel account of Chinese Buddhist travellers **Fa Hien** (during the reign of Chandragupta II) and **Hiuen Tsang** (during the reign of Emperor Harshavardhana).
   * Paintings are generally **themed around** the life of Buddha and the Jataka tales.

   (also explained in Chapter 01)

3. **Ellora Caves** (Maharashtra):
   * The name Ellora came from the short form of the ancient name Elloorpuram.
   * Nearly 100 km away from Ajanta Caves in the **Sahyadri range** of Maharashtra.
   * There are more than 100 caves at the site and all are excavated from the basalt cliffs. Out of the total caves, only 34 caves are open for public.
   * Out of those 34 caves – 17 **Brahmanical**, 12 **Buddhist** and, 5 **Jain** Digambara sect.
   * Developed during the period between the 5th and 11th centuries AD.
   * Most remarkable architecture here is the **Kailasha Temple** (Cave 16), built by Rashtrakuta king Krishna-I.

* Famous sculpture here is **Ravana shaking Mount Kailasha** (again in Cave 16).

(also explained in Chapter 01)

4. **Taj Mahal** (Uttar Pradesh):
   * Mausoleum of white marble, built by the Mughal emperor **Shah Jahan** in the 17th century in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal.
   * Called 'The jewel of Mughal art in India'.
   * Stands on the bank of the river **Yamuna**.
   * Abdul Hamid Lahori, in his book *Padshahnama*, refers to Taj Mahal as Rauza-i Munawwara, which means 'The illumined or illustrious tomb'.
   * Famous for its unique layout, perfect symmetry and **pietra dura work**.
   * Declared a **centrally protected monument of national importance** in 1920.

(also explained in Chapter 01)

1984

5. **Sun Temple, Konark** (Odisha):
   * Built in the 13th century by **King Narasinghadeva I** (AD 1238–64) of the Eastern Ganga dynasty.
   Located near Puri and dedicated to the **Sun God**.
   * It is classic example of the Odisha style of architecture or Kalinga architecture.
   * Designed in the shape of a **colossal chariot** which depicts rows of 12 wheels on each side of the temple being pulled by seven horses.
   * Sailors once called the Konark temple the **Black Pagoda**.

Sun Temple, Konark

   * It is a major pilgrimage site for Hindus. Hindu pilgrims gather here every year for the Chandrabhaga Mela around the month of February.
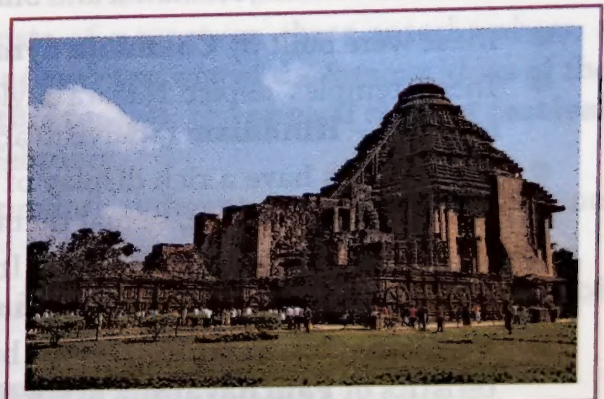
6. **Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram** (Tamil Nadu):
   * Built by the **Pallava kings** in the 7th and 8th centuries along the Coromandel Coast of the Bay of Bengal.
   * Major monuments here include the Pancha Rathas, Shore Temple, Arjuna's Penance or *Descent of the Ganges*, Caves Temples, etc.
   * Unique architectural styles in the forms of Rathas, Mandapas and giant open-air rock reliefs such as the *Descent of the Ganges*.

(explained in detail in Chapter 01)

1986

7. **Churches and Convents of Goa:**

   ❋ Chapel of St. Catherine, Church and Convent of St. Francis of Assisi, Church of Our Lady of Rosary, Basilica of Bom Jesus, Chapel of St. Cajetan, etc.

   ❋ **Basilica of Bom Jesus** is the most prominent monument among all churches there. It houses the sacred tomb of **St. Francis Xavier**.

   ❋ The Basilica of Bom Jesus in Goa was identified as one of the Seven Wonders of Portuguese Origin in the World in 2009.

8. **Khajuraho Group of Monuments** (Madhya Pradesh):

   ❋ Group of Hindu and Jain temples which include the following:

   ✓ Kandariya Mahadeva Temple, Vishvanatha Temple, Lakshmana Temple, Chausath Yogini Temple and so on of **Hindu origin**, and

   ✓ Parshvanatha, Adinatha and Shantinatha temples, etc. of **Jain origin**.

   ❋ These were built by **Chandela dynasty mainly** around the 9th–11th century AD.

   ❋ These temples depict Nagara style of architecture mainly belonging to two different religions – **Hinduism** (Shaivism and Vaishnavism) and **Jainism**.

   ❋ The temples have a rich display of intricately carved statues. While they are famous for their erotic sculpture, sexual themes cover less than 10% of the temple sculpture.

   ❋ **Kandariya Mahadeva Temple:** It is the **most visited** temple in the Khajuraho complex, built during the reign of **Vidyadhara**.

   ❋ **Vishvanatha Temple**: It was built by Chandela king **Dhanga**. It has the characteristics of **Panchayatana style** complex.

   Please Note: The 10th-century **Bhand Deva Temple in Rajasthan** (built in the style of the Khajuraho monuments) is often referred to as *Little Khajuraho*.

9. **Fatehpur Sikri** (near Agra, Uttar Pradesh):

   ❋ Also known as **the City of Victory**.

   ❋ Built by Emperor **Akbar** during the second half of the 16th century.

   ❋ Built in honour of the **Sufi Saint Sheikh Salim Chishti**.

   ❋ Served as the capital of the Mughal Empire for a short period of time.

   (explained in detail in Chapter 01)

10. **Group of Monuments at Hampi** (Karnataka):

    ❋ Hampi is located near the Tungabhadra River.

    ❋ They include Virupaksha temple, Lakshmi Narasimha temple, Hemakuta group of temples, Achyutaraya temple complex, Vitthala temple complex, Hazara Rama temple and the Lotus Mahal.

* These temples and monuments were built at their capital Hampi by the rulers of the Vijayanagara Empire between the 14th and 16th centuries.

* Gopuram and sanctum were constructed using stone and brick. The **Raya Gopuram** was introduced in temple architecture for the **first time** by **Raja Krishnadevaraya**.

* The 'Kishkindha Kaand' in the Ramayana is believed to have great significance about Hampi.
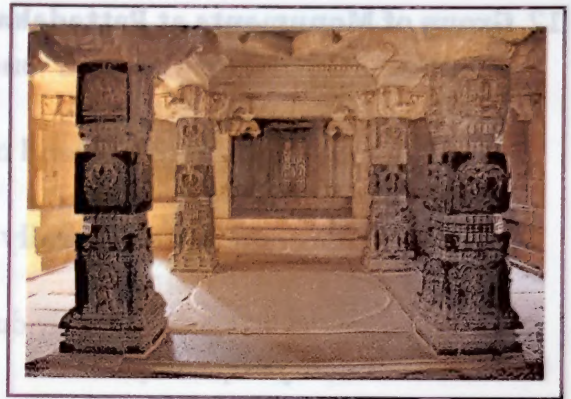
Monument at Hampi, Karnataka

* **Kalyana Mandapa** (for divine marriage) is another striking feature of the Vijayanagara temples.

* **Vittalaswami Temple Complex** is one of the most beautiful among all. The famous stone chariot is located inside this complex.

* **Virupaksha Temple:** The main temple consists of a sanctum, three antechambers, a pillared hall and an open pillared hall. **Krishnadevaraya**, one of the famous kings of the Vijayanagara Empire, was a **major patron of this temple**. The **annual chariot festival** is celebrated here every year in the month of February.

* The **pillars of the Hazara Rama Temple** produce different **melodious sounds** on being hit.

* A giant **Lakshmi Narasimha sculpture** is another attraction under this group of monuments.

* UNESCO described Hampi as an **'austere, grandiose site'**.

(also explained in Chapter 01)

1987

11. Elephanta Caves (Maharashtra):

* Located on Elephanta Island, **near Mumbai**. The island is also known as Gharapuri.

* The **seven caves** here are predominantly associated with the Hindu religion, mainly Shaivism and Shaktism.

* The caves contain rock-cut stone sculptures, mostly in **high relief**.

* The 20-ft-high **Trimurti** Shiva (also known as *Sadashiva* and *Maheshmurti*) is a famous sculpture here.

Trimurti, Elephanta Caves, Maharashtra

* Gangadhara, Nataraja, Yogishvara, Ravana shaking Mount Kailasha and Ardhanarishvara are other prominent sculptures inside the Elephanta Caves.

12. **Group of Monuments at Pattadakal** (Karnataka):

   ✲ **Nine Hindu temples and one Jain temple** which include Virupaksha Temple, Papanatha Temple and so on.

   ✲ They showcase a **unique blend** of architectural forms **from northern and Southern India**, that is **Vesara** style.

   ✲ The Hindu temples are **generally dedicated to Shiva**, but elements of Vaishnavism and Shaktism can also be noted.

   ✲ The Temples flourished mainly during the 7th and 8th centuries under the patronage of the **Chalukya dynasty**.

   ✲ The temple of **Virupaksha**, a masterpiece, was built in 740 AD by Queen **Lokamahadevi** to commemorate her husband **Vikramaditya II** over Pallava king **Nandivarman of Kanchipuram**.

13. **Great Living Chola Temples** (Tamil Nadu):

   ✲ They are a group of **Chola dynasty** era **Hindu temples** completed between the 11th and 12th century AD.

   ✲ The group includes **three** monuments – **Brihadisvara Temple**, Thanjavur (Tamil Nadu), **Brihadisvara Temple** (Gangaikonda Cholapuram) and **Airavatesvara Temple**, Darasuram (Tamil Nadu).

   ✲ Initially, the temple at **Thanjavur** was recognised by UNESCO (in 1987). Later in 2004, the temple complex at **Gangaikonda Cholapuram** and the **Airavatesvara Temple complex** were added as extensions to the site.

One of the Chola temples, Tamil Nadu

   ✲ The **Brihadisvara Temple at Thanjavur** (dedicated to Shiva) is one of the largest South Indian temples. It was built by Raja Raja Chola I in the early 11th century (1003–10 AD).

   ✲ The **Brihadisvara Temple at Gangaikonda Cholapuram** is also dedicated to Lord Shiva and was built by Rajendra Chola I as a part of his new capital in 1035 AD.

   ✲ The **Airavatesvara Temple in Darasuram** (built in 1166 AD) was named after the white elephant of God Indra. One of the striking features of this temple is Rajagambhira Thirumandapam (Royal Courtyard).

   1989

14. **Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi** (Madhya Pradesh):

   ✲ The monuments at Sanchi comprise a series of Buddhist monuments **starting from the Mauryan Empire period** (3rd century BC), continuing with the Gupta Empire period (5th century AD) and **ending around the 12th century AD**.

   ✲ It is the **oldest Buddhist sanctuary in existence**.

* These Buddhist monuments comprise **monolithic pillars, palaces, temples and monasteries.**
* Monuments include **Great Sanchi Stupa, Ashokan Pillar, Shunga Pillar, Schism Edicts, Siri Satakarni inscriptions of the Satavahana period** and various other stupas.
* The relief there depicts **aspects of Buddhism** but does not contain the image of Buddha.
* **Sculptures of Yakshi and Yaksha** can also be found on the Toranas (gates to the stupa).
* Sanchi Stupa is depicted on the reverse side of the Indian Rs 200 currency note.

Toran of Sanchi Stupa, Madhya Pradesh

1993

15. **Humayun's Tomb** (Delhi):
    * The tomb was commissioned by Humayun's first wife Bega Begum.
    * **First garden tomb** in the Indian subcontinent, which was completed in 1572.
    * It was also the **first structure** to use **red sandstone** at such a grand scale.
    * Represents **charbagh style** of architecture under Persian influence.

16. **Qutb Minar and Its Monuments** (Delhi):
    * Named after the Sufi Saint Khwaja **Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki** and built in the 13th century.
    * The complex comprises the Qutb Minar, Alai Darwaza, Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque and Iron pillar.
    * **Red sandstone** was mainly used in the construction of the Qutb Minar. Its construction was started **by Qutub-ud-din-Aibak**, continued thereafter by **Iltutmish** and finally completed by Firoz Shah Tughlaq.
    * The Qutb tower is surrounded by two aesthetically pleasing treasures:
        ✓ **Alai Darwaza (built later, by Ala-ud-din Khilji).**
        ✓ **Quwwat-ul–Islam mosque** (constructed over the ancient ruins of Jain and Hindu temples).

1999

17. **Darjeeling Himalayan Railway** (West Bengal) **(Under Mountain Railways of India)**:
    * Opened in 1881. It runs between Siliguri and Darjeeling using steam locomotives.
    * Design applies bold and ingenious engineering solutions to the problem of establishing an effective rail link across a mountainous terrain of great beauty.

2002

18. **Mahabodhi Temple Complex** (Bodh Gaya, Bihar):
    * One of the earliest Buddhist temples entirely made of bricks.
    * Considered to be **one of the four sacred sites** associated with the life of Gautamm Buddha.
    * It is the place where Buddha is believed to have **attained enlightenment**.
    * The temple was built by Emperor **Ashoka** in the 3rd century BC.
    * The temple complex comprises the **Mahabodhi Temple, sacred Bodhi Tree and Vajrasana or Diamond Throne** (located under the Bodhi tree).

2003

19. **Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka** (Madhya Pradesh):
    * Located within the **foothills of the Vindhya Mountains**, on the southern edge of the central Indian plateau.
    * They exhibit paintings that date back to **the Upper Palaeolithic, Mesolithic** and other periods succeeding it.
    * Paintings relate to themes such as everyday life, hunting scenes, war scenes, social life and so on.

    (explained in detail in Chapter 06)

Bhimbetka Rock Shelter, Madhya Pradesh

2004

20. **Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus or Victoria Terminus** (Mumbai, Maharashtra):
    * The building was designed by the British architect **F.W. Stevens**.
    * It is an example of **Victorian Gothic Revival architecture** in India.
    * Its design is based on the late medieval **Italian** models.

21. **Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park** (Gujarat):
    * **It was a** hill fortress of the early Hindu capital.
    * The park documents the transition between Hindu and Muslim culture and architecture in the 15th–16th century.
    * The site is the only complete and unchanged Islamic pre-Mughal city.
    * The **urban planning** of the city reveals well-laid and paved streets which lead to the city centre.
    * **Rainwater harvesting** is a notable feature in the Pavagadh hills (hill of hundred pools) and in Champaran (city of thousand wells).
    * The **Kalikamata** Temple on the top of Pavagadh Hill is considered to be an important shrine, attracting large numbers of pilgrims throughout the year.

2005

- **Nilgiri Mountain Railway** (Tamil Nadu) **(Under Mountain Railways of India)**:
  - Opened in 1908, it is a 46-km-long metre gauge single-track railway.
  - It is the only rack railway in India in which steam locomotives are used.
  - The train runs between Mettupalayam and Udhagamandalam.

2007

22. **Red Fort Complex** (Delhi):
    - Built as the palace fort of Shahjahanabad, the capital of Mughal emperor Shahjahan, and is named after its immense walls of red sandstone. It was commissioned **by Shahjahan** in **1638**.
    - It is an example of the acme of innovation and craftsmanship, reflecting the fusion of Persian, Timurid and Hindu traditions. The World Heritage Convention characterised Red Fort as representing 'the **zenith of Mughal creativity**'.

Red Fort, Delhi

  - The Red Fort Complex comprises **Lahori Gate**, Meena Bazaar, Naubat Khana, **Nahr-i-Bihisht** (Stream of Paradise), Mumtaz Mahal, Khas Mahal, Diwan-i-Aam, Diwan-i-Khas, and **Moti Masjid** (by Aurangzeb).
  - The Red Fort also appears on the back of the Rs **500 currency note**.
  - **On Independence Day every year**, the Prime Minister hoists the national flag here.

2008

- **Kalka-Shimla railway** (Himachal Pradesh) **(Under Mountain Railways of India)**:
  - It is a 96.6-km-long, single-track working rail link built in the mid-19th century.

2010

23. **Jantar Mantar** (Jaipur, Rajasthan) (not the one situated in Delhi):
    - Built in the early 18th century by Rajput king **Sawai Jai Singh II.**
    - Designed to **observe astronomical positions** with the naked eye.
    - A set of 19 astronomical instruments are installed at this site to make accurate observations. It features the world's largest stone sundial.
    - It is a manifestation of astronomical skills and knowledge, dating back to the **Mughal times**.

2013

24. **Six Hill Forts of Rajasthan**
    - **Chittor Fort** at Chittorgarh
    - **Kumbhalgarh Fort** at Kumbhalgarh
    - **Ranthambore Fort** at Sawai Madhopur
    - **Amer Fort** at Jaipur
    - **Jaisalmer Fort** at Jaisalmer
    - **Gagron Fort** at Jhalawar
    - Magnificent and stalwart exterior of the forts manifests the lifestyle and nature of the Rajput rule over this land from the 8th to 18th centuries.
    - These fortifications enclose urban centres, palaces, trading centres and temples, where various forms of art and culture flourished.
    - UNESCO recognised these forts as a serial cultural property and examples of **Rajput military hill architecture.**

2014

25. **Rani-ki-Vav** (The Queen's Stepwell) (Gujarat):
    - Situated on the banks of **Saraswati river**.
    - Constructed in the 11th century AD.
    - Built in **Maru-Gujara** architectural style.
    - Designed in the form of an **inverted temple** to emphasise the **sanctity of water** and is endowed with over a thousand sculptures depicting a combination of religious, mythological and secular imagery.
    - Rani-ki-Vav is featured on the reverse side of the ₹100 Indian currency note.
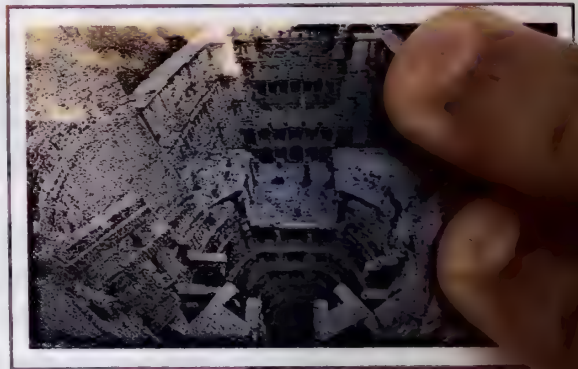
Rani-ki-Vav, Gujarat

2016

26. **The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier** (Capital Complex, Chandigarh)
    - They are **an outstanding contribution to the Modern Movement**.
    - They comprise **17 sites** spread across **seven countries** and stands as the testimony to new forms of architectural expression weaved with modern traditions.
    - Of the 17 sites, the majority are located in France. Only **one site** is located in India **(Capital Complex, Chandigarh)**.
    - They propagate the ideals of the modern movements and are also considered a significant response to fundamental issues of architecture and society in the 20th century.

27. **Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara** (Bihar):

    ❋ Considered to be the **most ancient university** of the **Indian sub-continent**.

    ❋ Remains of a monastic and scholastic institution dating from the 3rd century BC to the 13th century AD.

    ❋ Includes stupas, shrines, viharas and important artwork in stucco, stone and metal.

    ❋ The historical development of the site testifies to the development of **Buddhism** into a religion.

Nalanda Mahavihara, Bihar

2017

28. **Historic City of Ahmedabad:**

    ❋ Located on the bank of **Sabarmati river**.

    Founded by **Sultan Ahmad Shah** in the 15th century.

    This city is a testimony to the **harmonious existence of diverse religion** on this land which includes the famous **Bhadra citadel** accompanied by various mosques, tombs as well as numerous Hindu and Jain temples.

    ❋ The urban fabric consists of densely packed traditional houses in gated traditional streets **(puras)**.

2018

29. **Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai:**

    ❋ Includes a collection of public buildings designed in Victorian neo-Gothic style in the 19th century and in Art Deco style in the 20th century.

    ❋ Exhibits **assimilation** of **European and Indian values in the artistic features**.

2019

30. **Jaipur City** (Rajasthan)

    ❋ It portrays an **exemplary development in town planning** and **architecture** that demonstrates an **amalgamation and important exchange of ideas in the late medieval period**.

    ❋ It becomes the second city after Ahmedabad to get recognition.

    ❋ This walled city of Jaipur was founded in 1727 AD under the patronage of **Sawai Jai Singh II**.

* Iconic monuments in the city include: **Govind Dev Ji temple, City Palace, Jantar Mantar, Hawa Mahal,** etc.

2021

31. Kakatiya Ramappa Temple (Telangana):

* It is also known as the Rudreshwara **(Lord Shiva)** temple.
* In the temple, Lord Ramalingeswara is worshipped.
* It was built by Recharla Senapati Rudra, a general of **Kakatiya** king Ganapati Deva.
* Its construction was started in **1213 AD** and it is said to have continued for the next 40 years.

Kakatiya Ramappa Temple, Telangana

* Its foundation was laid using the **'sandbox technique'**. The main structure is in reddish sandstone, flooring is granite and the pillars are made up of black basalt.
* The temple stands on a 6-ft-high **star-shaped platform**.
* The vimana of the temple is made up of lightweight porous bricks (also called **'floating bricks'**).
* Marco Polo, during his visit to the Kakatiya dynasty, is believed to have referred temple as *'the brightest star in the galaxy of temples'*.
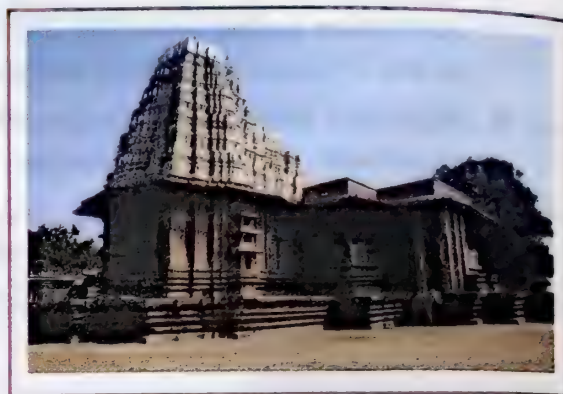
32. Dholavira: a Harappan City (Gujarat):

* It is situated on Khadir bet island of the **Kutch Desert Wildlife Sanctuary** in the Rann of Kutch.
* The ancient city of Dholavira under Harappan Civilisation is one of the **best preserved urban settlements**. The site has a fortified citadel, a middle town and a lower town.
* It was discovered in **1968** by archaeologist **Jagat Pati Joshi.**
* The elements found here are a *sophisticated water management system, a large cemetery, bead processing workshops, etc.*
* Evidence of **inter-regional trade** has also been discovered here.
* Unlike graves at other Indus Valley Civilisation sites, **no mortal remains of humans** have been discovered at Dholavira.
* Dholavira is the **first site** of Indus Valley Civilisation in India to receive this UNESCO recognition.

Please Note: *Khangchendzonga National Park is the only Indian World Heritage Site till date, declared by UNESCO under the **mixed category**.*

Benefits of the World Heritage Site Status

* Brings international attention to the need for the preservation and conservation of the site.
* Brings tourism to the site ensuring economic benefits.
* UNESCO provides funds for restoration, preservation and training, if required.
* Promotes close ties with the United Nations and provides prestige and support.
* Enables access to global project management resources.
* Facilitates creation of partnerships between the government, private sector and NGOs to achieve conservation goals.
* Site becomes protected under the Geneva Convention against destruction or misuse during wartime.

In 2022, six Indian Sites have been added in the Tentative List of World Heritage Sites, namely:

1. *Geoglyphs of Konkan Region of India in Maharashtra*
2. *Jingkieng jri: Living Root Bridge Cultural Landscapes in Meghalaya*
3. *Sri Veerabhadra Temple and Monolithic Bull (Nandi), Lepakshi (The Vijayanagara Sculpture and Painting Art Tradition) in Andhra Pradesh*
4. *Sun Temple, Modhera and its adjoining monuments in Gujarat*
5. *Vadnagar – A multi-layered historic town in Gujarat*
6. *Rock-cut Sculptures and Reliefs of the Unakoti, Unakoti Range, in Unakoti District in Gujarat*

In 2023 (till July month), two Indian Sites have been added in the Tentative List of World Heritage Sites, namely:

1. *Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysala in Karnataka.*
2. *Santiniketan in West Bengal*

List of World Heritage in Danger

The List of World Heritage in Danger is designed to inform people of conditions which threaten the very characteristics for which a property was inscribed on the World Heritage List, and to encourage corrective action in that regard.

As of July 2023, the World Heritage Committee has included **55 properties** from across the globe in the List of World Heritage in Danger, in accordance with the provisions of the World Heritage Convention of 1972. The Committee can allocate immediate assistance from the **World Heritage Fund** to the endangered property. A World Heritage Site may lose its designation when the UNESCO World Heritage Committee determines that they are not properly managed or protected even after its inclusion in the danger list. Thereafter, it is included in the list of *Former World Heritage Sites*.

**NO property from India** has been added in this UNESCO Danger List as of July, 2023.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- **UNESCO World Heritage Site** – outstanding universal value – has to meet at least one of the 10 criteria for being declared as World Heritage Site – 6 for cultural – 4 for natural.

- **Legal status of Heritage Site** – considered as culturally sensitive – legal protection under the Geneva Convention – country receives assistance from UNESCO for its conservation.

- **In India, UNESCO has declared 40 World Heritage Sites** (as of July 2023) – 32 cultural sites – 7 natural sites – and 1 site under mixed category.

- **Kakatiya Ramappa Temple** (Telangana) – declared as World Heritage Site in 2021 – built by Recharla Senapati Rudra – Marco Polo described it as 'the brightest star in the galaxy of temples'.

- **Dholavira** – declared as World Heritage Site in 2021 – it is Harappan city – located in present-day Gujarat – best preserved urban settlement – discovered in 1968 – by Jagat Pati Joshi.

- **Khangchendzonga National Park** – World Heritage Site – under mixed category.

CHAPTER 9

INDIAN MUSIC
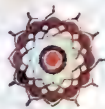
Introduction

Music is the soul of any culture, and India has had a long tradition of musical ingenuity. It is said that Narada Muni (the sage) introduced the art of music to Earth, and that he also taught the inhabitants of the Earth about the sound that pervades the whole universe, called **Nada Brahma**.

A musical instrument, the **seven-holed flute**, has been recovered from the sites of the Indus Valley Civilisation. Another instrument, the **Ravanahatha**, is believed to have originated from the Hela Civilisation in Sri Lanka and is one of the oldest known.

Literary traces of music can be found from about 2000 years ago, during the Vedic era. All seven notes of the raga **Kharaharapriya** can be found in descending order in **Sama Veda**. The science

of music called the **Gandharva Veda** is an Upaveda of the Sama Veda. Parts of the instrument Veena are mentioned in **Aitareya Aranyaka**. The **Jaiminiya Brahmana** speaks about dance and music collectively. Musicologists have purported theories about the word **Om** being the source of all ragas and notes. Panini, in the 4th century BC, made the first proper reference to the art of making music, but the first reference to musical theory was discussed in Bharata's **Natyashastra**, which was written and compiled between 200 BC and 200 AD.
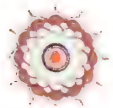
History of Indian Music

Much of the development of music stemmed from it being played at religious sites. This type of ritualistic music was displayed in the later Vedic period through a type of music called **Sangama**, which involved chanting of verses that were usually set to musical patterns. The epics also were set to a narrative type of music called **Jatigan**.

The first work that clarified and elaborated on the subject of musicology was Bharata's **Natyashastra**. This contains several important chapters on music, especially those that identified the octave and elaborated on its 22 keys. These 22 keys were recognised as *shrutis* or **srutis**. This distinction was made in **Dattilam**, a text that endorsed the existence of 22 *srutis* per octave and made the suggestion that these were the only sounds that the human body could make. **Sarangadeva**, a 13th-century musicologist who wrote a classic text on music, the **Sangeet Ratnakara**, seconded this view.

Sangeet Ratnakara defined about 264 ragas, including some from the north Indian and Dravidian repertoires. Its greatest contribution was to identify and describe the various 'microtones' and classify them into different categories. Later, some medieval texts on musicology focused on particular themes, for example, **Brihaddeshi** written in Sanskrit between the 6th and 8th centuries by Matanga focused on the definition of the word 'raga'.

Other important texts of this period include **Swaramela-Kalanidhi** written by **Ramamatya** in the 16th century, which again deals primarily with ragas.

Chaturdandiprakashika, written by Venkatamakhin in the 17th century, is also well known for the important information it contains on Carnatic musicology. During the ancient and early medieval periods, evidence can be found for the existence of **Gurukuls**, where students lived with their teacher in order to become masters in the art of music.

Gurukul System

- This is also known as **Ashram** (hermitage system) and it embodied the *Guru-shishya* tradition, under which the teacher and student relationship was very close.
- In the ancient period, the teachers or masters were sages and the students had to live in the hermitage for **12 years** gained knowledge by serving their master.
- These hermitages received **patronage from kings** and other wealthy persons.

- Life in the hermitage was rigorous and pensive, with in-depth knowledge obtained through direct experience.
- All students, whether a prince or a commoner, were treated the same, and there was **no discrimination**.

The change in the tenor of music came with the influence of Persian elements. This influx of Islamic and Persian elements changed the face of north Indian music, for example, the *Dhruvapad* or the devotional style of singing patronised by the rulers was transformed into the **Dhrupad** style by the 15th century. By the 17th century, a new form of Hindustani music had evolved, called the Khayal style. Furthermore, many more styles of 'folk' singing emerged.

The sculptures of Gandharvas are found in different locations of South Asia. Gandharvas are celestial musicians carrying different types of musical instruments. According to Hindu mythology, they are the musicians of Lord Indra's heaven. They are also mentioned in Vedic era literature.

Garuda and Gandharvas at the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, Thailand

Anatomy of Indian Music

Before one delves into the different types and kinds of Indian music it is necessary to understand the anatomy of Indian classical music. There are three main pillars of Indian classical music: **Raga, Tala** and **Swara**. These elements can be seen as follows:

Swara

In the ancient period, the term 'Swara' was associated with the recitation of the Vedas. Over time, the term was used to define the **'note'** or **'scale degree'** in a composition. In the *Natyashastra*, **Bharata** divided the Swaras into a **scale of 22 notes**. Currently, the notational system of Hindustani music is defined by the following abbreviated swaras: **sa, re, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni**. The Seven Swaras together are called **Saptak or Sargam**. He described each **pitch** using the names mentioned in the table on the right side.

Name of the Pitch	Function	Abbreviation
Shadja	Tonic	Sa
Rishabha	Supertonic	Re
Gandhara	Mediant	Ga
Madhyama	Sub-dominant	Ma
Panchama	Dominant	Pa
Dhaivata	Sub-mediant	Dha
Nishada	Subtonic	Ni

The Swara differs from a Shruti. A **Shruti is the smallest gradation of pitch** representing the quality of frequency. There are **22 Shrutis or microtones, of which only 12 are audible.** These 12 include the *seven Suddha Swaras* and *five Vikrit Swaras.* Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha and Ni are Suddha Swaras.

Raga

The word 'raga' comes from the Sanskrit word 'Ranj', which literally means to delight or to be happy and satisfy a person. The ragas form the **basis of melody**, while the *tala* becomes the basis of the rhythm. Each melodic structure of the raga has something similar to a **distinct personality subject** and a **mood** evoked by the sounds.

The basic element necessary for the working of a raga is the note on which it is based. According to the number of notes in the raga, there are three main *jaatis* or categories:

1. *Audav/Odava Raga:* a 'pentatonic' raga, which contains **five notes**
2. *Shadava Raga:* a 'hexatonic' raga, which contains **six notes**
3. *Sampurna Raga:* a 'heptatonic' raga, which contains **seven notes**

A raga is neither a scale nor a mode, but is a scientific, precise, subtle and aesthetic melodic form with its own peculiar ascending and descending movement, which consists of either a full octave or a series of five, six or seven notes. There are three major types of Raga or **Raga Bhed**:

Shuddha Raag

This is a raga in which, if any notes that are absent in its composition are played, its nature and form do not change.

Chhayalag Raag

This is a raga in which if any notes that are not present in the original composition are played, its nature and form change.

Sankeerna Raag

This is a raga in which there is a combination of two or more ragas.

Hence, every raga should contain the basic five notes. Amongst these ragas:

* The 'King' is the **principal note** on which the raga is built. This is called the **'Vaadi'** and it is used most often in the composition.
* The next important note is the 'Queen', which corresponds with the fourth or fifth note in relation to the principal raga. This second most important note of the 'raga' is called **'Samvaadi'**.
* All notes in the composition other than the *vaadi* and *samvaadi* are called the **Anuvaadi**.
* Finally, the notes that are not present in the composition are called **Vivadi**.

Furthermore, the ascent of the notes means that each note is higher than the preceding note, for example, *sa re ga ma pa dha ni.* This ascent is called the **Aroha**. Similarly, the descent of the notes is called the **Avaroha**, where each note is lower than the preceding notes. For example, *ni, dha, pa, ma,*

ga, re, sa. Depending on the ascent and descent of the notes, the ragas can be divided into three speeds or Laya: **Vilambit** (slow), **Madhya** (medium) and **Drut** (fast).

Although there are 72 **melas** or parent scales on which ragas are based under Carnatic music, there are **six main ragas** under Hindustani music repertoire and all of these are **time** and **season** specific and evoke a particular type of **emotion** (**Rasa**):

Veena

Raga	Time	Season	Mood (Rasa)
Bhairav	Dawn	Any season	Peace
Hindol	Morning	Spring	Evokes sweetness of a young couple
Deepak	Night	Summer	Compassion
Megh	Late night	Rainy	Courage
Shree	Evening	Winter	Gladness
Malkaush	Midnight	Winter	Vir or Brave

RASA

The reason behind the creation of ragas was to evoke **emotional responses** in the performer and the audience. These emotions, which are evoked through the singing and playing of instruments, are called rasas. The rasas have also been described as an **'aesthetic delight'** as they are consciously made to evoke an emotion through someone else's art, even though they are free from the limitations of personal feelings. Initially, there were eight rasas, but later another rasa called the 'shanta' rasa was added to make **nine rasas or 'Nauras'**. These are:

Type of Rasa	Evoked Mood
Shringara	Love
Hasya	Humour/Laughter
Karuna	Pathos
Raudra	Anger
Bhayanak	Horror
Veer	Bravery
Adbhuta	Wonder
Bibhatsya	Disgust
Shant	Peace or Calm

However, after the 15th century, **Bhakti** or the rasa of devotion to God became widely accepted into the initial corpus of the nine rasas. Some musicologists argue that Bhakti and Shant rasa are one and the same.

Tala/Taal

The rhythmic **groupings of beats** are called tala. These rhythmical cycles range from **3** to **108 beats**. According to the concept of tala, musical time is divided into simple and complicated metres. This theory of **time measurement** differs between Hindustani and Carnatic music. The uniqueness of the concept of tala is that it is independent of the music that accompanies it and has its own divisions. The tempo of the tala, which keeps the uniformity of the time span, is called the *laya*.

Several musicologists have argued that there are more than 100 talas, but only 30 *talas* are currently known and even within that number only 10–12 are actually used. Different kinds of recognised and used talas are *dadra, kaharba, rupak, ektal, jhaptal, teen-tal* and *chautal*. Amongst these, music composers most often use teen-tal, which has 16 beats.

Sarod

Unlike Hindustani music, Carnatic music has a much more rigid structure. The Tala (thala) are made of three components: *laghu, dhrutam* and *anu dhrutam*. There are 35 original thalas, and each of these can be further split into five 'ghaatis'. Hence, there are 175 (35 × 5) thalas in Carnatic music. The most prominent thala in Carnatic music in aditala.

Thaat

Thaat is a system of **classification** of ragas into different groups. Currently, in Hindustani classical music, a **10-thaat classification** has been adopted. According to Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande (1860–1936), one of the most important musicologists in the field of north Indian classical music, each of the several traditional ragas is based on or is a variation of 10 basic thaats or **musical scales** or frameworks. A thaat can **only be sung in aarohi** as the notes are composed in ascending order.

A thaat should have **seven notes** out of the 12 available (seven Suddha Swaras and five Vikrit Swaras) and they should **necessarily be placed in ascending order**. The 10 thaats are: *Bilawal, Khamaj, Kafi, Asavari, Bhairavi, Bhairav, Kalyan, Marwa, Poorvi* and *Todi*. Thaat has **no emotional quality**, unlike raga, and it is not sung. The ragas produced from the thaat are sung.

Samay

Each raga has a specific time at which it is performed. This is because those notes are considered to be more effective at that particular time. The 24 hours of the day can be divided into two parts:

1. From 12 AM to 12 PM: called the **Poorva Bhaag** and the ragas sung in this period are called **Poorva raga**.

2. From 12 PM to 12 AM: called the **Uttar Bhaag** and the ragas sung in this time frame are called **Uttar raga**.

Furthermore, the **saptak** also changes according to the time of day. For example, in the Poorvang period, the saptak is from Sa to Ma (sa, re, ga, ma). In contrast, in the Uttarang period, the saptak is from Pa to Sa (pa, dha, ni, sa).

Other Components of Raga

1. The **gradual exposition** of the raga that emphasises on Vaadi, Samvaadi and other silent features of the raga in **slow tempo** is called an **Alap**. It is typically sung at the **beginning** of the raga at the time of the performance in north Indian classical music. It is usually sung in the *Aakaar*, that is, without pronouncing any syllables, only using the 'aa' sound of the vowels.
2. **Secondly**, the musical composition can be divided into two parts under Hindustani classical music:

| yee/Mukhda	First part of the composition (maximum used)
	Second part of the composition

Thirdly, the basic notes in a *fast tempo* are called **taan**. These are very technical and show the training, practice and dexterity in weaving the complicated pattern of the notes with variations in rhythm. Speed is an important factor in singing taans. Some particular taans are sung in the aakaar notes. Within the corpus of taans, a short taan of three or four notes is called a **Murki**. These are sung very fast and require considerable musical skill from the singer.

4. Finally, during the composition of a musical piece, ornamentation is required in the form of **'Alankar'**. This is a specific melodic presentation in succession in which a pattern is followed. For example, the combination of notes 'sa re ga', 'ga ma pa', 'ma pa dha', and so on. In these combinations we see an *alankar* in which three notes are used in succession each time.

Basis of Difference	Thaat	Raga
Origin	These are scales which are produced from 12 swara (notes).	Ragas belong to the genre of thaats.
Number of Notes	Thaat must have **seven notes** in it.	Raga must have **at least five** notes in it.
Types of Notes	It only has **Aaroha** or ascending notes.	It has **Aaroha** and **Avaroha** notes.
Melody	It is not necessary for thaat to be melodious as they are not sung.	Ragas are sung and hence they are melodious.
Important Notes	Thaats **don't** have *vaadi* and *samvaadi*.	Ragas have *vaadi* and *samvaadi*.
Naming	Thaats are named after the popular ragas.	Ragas are named after the emotion they evoke.
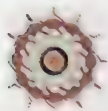
Classification of Indian Music

There are many different categories of music prevalent in the Indian subcontinent. Some are closer to the classical bent and some are experimenting with global music. Recently, there has been a trend to create a fusion of classical heritage with newer musical strands such as pop and jazz, and this has been garnering attention from the wider public. The classification of Indian music is as follows:
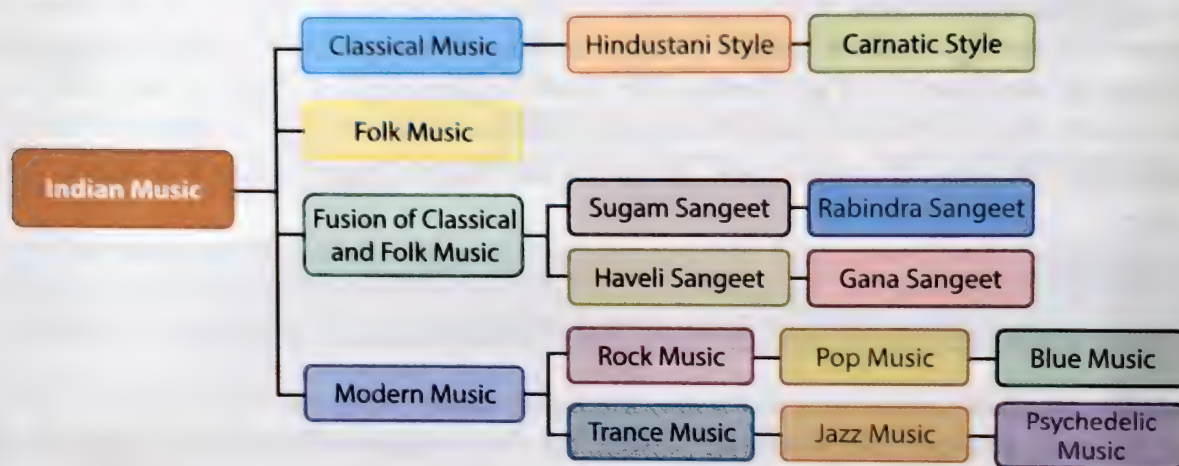
Classification of Indian Music

Classical Music

Over time, two distinct schools of Indian classical music have evolved:

1. **Hindustani** music: practised in the northern parts of India.
2. **Carnatic** music: practised in the southern parts of India.

While the historical roots of both these music types can be traced to Bharata's *Natyashastra*, they diverged in the 14th century.

Hindustani Music

The Hindustani branch of music focuses more on the musical structure and the **possibilities of improvisation** within it. The Hindustani branch adopted a scale of **Shudha Swara Saptaka** or the 'Octave of Natural Notes'.

There are 10 main styles of singing in Hindustani music: 'Dhrupad', 'Dhamar', 'Hori', 'Khayal', 'Tappa', 'Chaturang', 'Ragasagar', 'Tarana', 'Sargam' and 'Thumri'. Some of the major styles are discussed as follows:

Dhrupad Style

This is one of the **oldest and grandest known forms** of Hindustani classical music and finds mention even in **Natyashastra** (200 BC–200 AD). It is said that dhrupad owes its roots to older forms such as *Prabhanda* and *Dhruvapada*. The name is derived from 'dhruva' and 'pada,' which means that it denotes both the verse form of the poetry and the style in which it is sung. Although Dhrupad consolidated its position as a classical form of music in the 13th century, it reached its zenith in the court of Emperor **Akbar**.
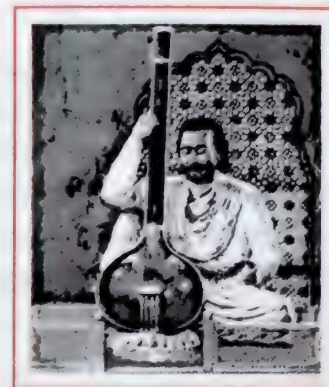
Mian Tansen

Akbar employed and patronised musical masters including Swami **Haridas** and Mian **Tansen**. **Tansen** (one of the Navaratna or nine gems in Akbar's court) and **Baiju Bawra** were the students of Swami Haridas and were major proponents of dhrupad music during the 15th–16th centuries. Dhrupad became the major form of singing in the medieval period but fell into decline in the 18th century.

Dhrupad is essentially a **poetic form** that is incorporated into an extended presentation style that is marked by **precise and overt elaboration of a raga**.

Dhrupad **starts with Alap** which is sung without words. The tempo rises gradually, and it is the major part of the performance. The alap evokes a mood in the audience that coincides with the mood of the raga that is being performed. Alap is a *pure music without the distraction of words.* Then, after some time, Dhrupad begins and Pakhawaj is played.

...srau

...e was a Sufi musician, poet and scholar during the period of the Delhi Sultanate. Khusrau has been regarded as the 'Father of Qawwali'. He also introduced the Ghazal style of singing in India.

Khusrau's descendants who specialised in Qawwali singing were classified as –

- **Qawwals** – *they sang Muslim devotional songs, and*
- **Kalawants** – *they sang mundane songs in Qawwali style.*

Tarana and Trivat *were also invented by Khusrau. Khusrau has been credited for the invention of **sitar**.*

Swami Haridas

*Swami Haridas **(1478–1573)** was a spiritual poet and classical musician credited with a large body of devotional compositions, especially in the **dhrupad** style. He was patronised by Akbar and is said to have been the **teacher of Mian Tansen and Baiju Bawra**. More than Krishna, **Radha** was the central personality of all his poems.*

Mian Tansen

*Mian Tansen was a 16th-century musician and one of the **navratnas** (nine jewels) in the court of **Akbar**. Akbar gave him the title **'Mian'**, meaning a learned man. A master of Dhrupad music, Tansen created **several***

new ragas. Compositions by Tansen mainly relate to **Hindu Gods** and **Goddesses and his patrons** like Emperor Akbar. Tansen's tomb is located at his birthplace, **Gwalior**. According to Abul Fazal, "A singer like him had not been in India for the last thousand years."

Tansen began his career in the court and patronage of the Hindu king of Rewa, Raja Ramchandra Singh. His actual name was Ramtanu Pandey. Tansen joined Akbar's court in 1562. Tansen is greatly admired for his epic Dhrupad compositions. He also wrote two classic books on music – Sangita Sara and Sri Ganesh Stotra.

Baiju Bawra

A dhrupad musician, Baijnath Mishra (Baiju Bawra) lived during the 15th–16th centuries. He is said to have been the **pupil of Swami Haridas** and a contemporary of Mian Tansen. He was one of the **court musicians of Man Singh Tomar** of Gwalior. Samadhi of Baiju Bawra is located in **Chanderi, Madhya Pradesh**.

Naubat Khan

He was also known as Ali Khan Karori. He was an Indian classical music composer who was made a Mansabdar by **Mughal Emperor Akbar**. He is also famous for his skills with the **rudra veena**. Naubat Khan is shown playing rudra veena in many paintings by Mughal court artists. He was the contemporary and son-in-law of Tansen.

Gunsamundra

Lal Khan (Gunsamundra) was a Dhrupad musician in the court of the Mughal emperor **Shah Jahan**. He was conferred this title of Gunsamundra by Shah Jahan in 1637. Lal Khan was the son of celebrated Veena player Naubat Khan.

Dhrupad includes the use of **Sanskrit syllables** and is of **temple origin**. Dhrupad compositions usually have **four to five stanzas** and are performed by a duo. Generally, two male vocalists perform the Dhrupad style of performances, with **Tanpura** and **Pakhawaj** usually accompanying them. Dhrupad singing can be further divided into **four sub-forms** on the basis of the *vanis* or *banis* that they perform:

1. *Dagari Gharana:* The Dagar family sings in **Dagar Vani**. This style puts great emphasis on **alap**. For several generations, men from this family have trained and performed in pairs. Dagars are generally **Muslims** but usually **sing Hindu texts** of Gods and Goddesses. A prominent duo of Dagari Gharana in this generation is the *Gundecha Brothers (Umakant and Late Ramakant).*

Gundecha Brothers

2. *Darbhanga Gharana:* These singers perform the **Khandhar Vani** and the **Gauhar Vani**. This gharana of Bihar is unique in the sense that it provides an **equal balance between** the **alap**, or opening section, and the **bandish**, instead of emphasising the alap as is typical in other dhrupad gharanas. They improvise the music by incorporating a variety of **layakari**. Famous

proponents include Ram Chatur Mallick and Pandit Siyaram Tewari. The current leading exponents of this school are the **Mallick family**.

3. *Bettiah Gharana:* This gharana of Bihar performs in the **Gauhar** and **Khandhar** vani styles. This gharana treats **bandish** as the core of dhrupad and thus, the rendition of the bandish consumes a larger part of the performance. The most famous exponents of this gharana are the **Mishra family**. The most regularly performing current member is Indra Kishore Mishra.

4. *Talwandi Gharana:* These sing the Khandhar vani but, as it is based in Pakistan, it has become difficult to keep it within the Indian system of music.

Gharana System

- A *gharana* is a system of social organisation linking musicians or dancers by **lineage or apprenticeship**, and by adherence to a particular musical style.

- The word *gharana* comes from the Urdu/Hindi word 'ghar', which means **'family' or 'house'**. It typically refers to the place where the musical ideology originated.

- A *gharana* also indicates a comprehensive musicological ideology and differentiates one school from another.

- It directly affects the thinking, teaching, performance and appreciation of music.

- The *gharanas* best known for singing Hindustani classical music include Agra, Gwalior, Indore, Jaipur, Kirana, and Patiala.

Khyal/Khayal Style

The word 'Khyal' is derived from Persian word and it means **'idea or imagination'**. The origin of this style was attributed to **Amir Khusrau**. This form is popular amongst the artists as it provides greater scope for improvisation. Khyal is based on a repertoire of **short songs** ranging from two to eight lines. Generally, a Khyal composition is also referred to as a '*Bandish*'.

Hussain Shah (a Sharqi ruler of Jaunpur Sultanate) gave the most generous patronage to Khyal in the 15th century. One of the most *unique features* of Khyal is the frequent *use of taans* in the composition. Therefore, Alap is given much less room in Khyal music as compared to Dhrupad. A typical Khyal performance uses two songs:

1. *Bada Khyal:* sung in the slow tempo

2. *Chhota Khyal:* sung in the fast tempo

Bada Khyal comprises most of the performance.

Generally, each singer renders the same bandish differently, while keeping the text and raga constant. Usually, the theme for these Khyal bandish is **romantic** in nature. They sing about love, even if the song is related to divine creatures. They also may praise God or a particular

king. Exceptional Khyal compositions are composed in the praise of **Lord Krishna**. The **major gharanas** under Khyal music are:

* **Gwalior Gharana:** This is one of the **oldest** and most elaborate Khyal Gharana. It is rigorous in its approach as there is equal emphasis placed on the **melody** and **rhythm**. Although the singing is very complex, the performance of **simple well-known ragas and using sapaat (straight) taans** is still preferred. The most popular expounders of this Gharana are **Natthu Khan** and **Vishnu Digambar Palushkar**.

* **Kirana Gharana:** This gharana is named after the town Kirana in Uttar Pradesh. Nayak Gopal founded it; however the real credit of making this popular lies with Abdul Karim Khan and Abdul Wahid Khan in the early 20th century. The Kirana Gharana is famous for its emphasis on **precise tuning and expression of individual notes (swaras)**.

  The **Kirana** gharana is better known for its mastery over the **slow tempo ragas**. There is a greater emphasis on the **melody** of the composition and the clarity of the pronunciation of the lyrics in the song. The use of traditional ragas is also preferred. There has been a long line of great singers including **Pandit Bhimsen Joshi** and **Gangubai Hangal**. The Carnatic exponents from the border regions of Maharashtra and Karnataka are also very familiar with Kirana Gharana.

Sadarang (1670–1748)

Sadarang was the pen name of the Hindustani music composer Nyamat Khan. He was the court musician of Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah (ruled 1719–1748). Sadarang holds an eminent position in the history of medieval music for his contribution in Khayal music.

Pandit Bhimsen Joshi (1922–2011)

*He was a prominent Khyal proponent of Kirana Gharana and received the **Bharat Ratna in 2008**. Some major Ragas used by Shri Joshi include Suddha Kalyan, Miyan ki Todi, Multani and Bhimpalasi. He is widely recognised in India for his performance in the 1988 video **'Mile Sur Mera Tumhara'**.*

Pandit Bhimsen Jo

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* **Agra Gharana:** This gharana is descended from the Nauhar Vani tradition. The composition under Agra Gharana is a **blend of Khyal and Dhrupad-dhamar styles**. The artists give special emphasis to **Bandish** in the composition. Historians argue that Khudabuksh established this Gharana in the 19th century, but musicologists claim that it was founded by Haji Sujan Khan. Faiyyaz Khan revived the Gharana by giving it a fresh and lyrical touch. Since then, it has been renamed the **Rangila Gharana**. The major expounders of this school include Vilayat Hussain Khan and Faiyaz Hussain Khan.

* **Patiala Gharana:** Bade Fateh Ali Khan and Ali Baksh Jarnail Khan started this Gharana in the 19th century. It received initial sponsorship from the Maharaja of Patiala in Punjab, soon garnering a reputation for ghazal, thumri and khyal. The focus is on **greater** use of **rhythm**. As their compositions stress the **emotions** they tend to use ornamentation or **alankars** in their music, with their special feature being rendering of **intricate taans**.

  The most well-known composer from this Gharana is **Bade Ghulam Ali Khan Sahab**, who was one of India's greatest Hindustani classical vocalists who overcame the restriction of vocals being limited to an elite audience. He was well known for his rendition of **Raga Darbari**. The Gharana is unique as it uses unique taans, gamak and gayaki of tarana style.

* **Bhendibazaar Gharana:** Chhajju Khan, Nazir Khan and Khadim Hussain Khan founded this Gharana in the 19th century in the Bhendibazaar area of Mumbai. It gained popularity and fame as the singers were trained to **control their breath** for a long period of time. Using this technique, the artists could sing **long passages in a single breath**. Furthermore, their uniqueness lies in using some of the **Carnatic ragas** in their enviable repertoire.

Bade Ghulam Ali Khan of Patiala Gharana

Tarana Style

In this style, the rhythm plays a very crucial role. The structure consists mainly of **melody**, usually is short, and repeated many times, with variation and elaboration at the performer's discretion. There is a second contrasting melody, usually with higher notes, which is introduced once before returning to the main melody.

It uses many words that are sung at a **fast tempo**. The focus is on producing rhythmic matters and hence, the singers need specialised training and skills in rhythmic manipulation. The tarana style was invented by **Amir Khusrau** in the 13th–14th centuries and was also used by the 10th Sikh Guru, **Guru Gobind Singh**, in his compositions. Currently, one of the most renowned tarana singers is **Pandit Rattan Mohan Sharma** of the Mewati Gharana. The audience at Pandit Motiram Sangeet Samaroh in Hyderabad gave him the title of **'Tarana ke Baadshah'** (King of Tarana).

Semi-Classical Styles of Hindustani Music

The **semi-classical** style of music is also based on **swara** (note). However, it deviates slightly from the standard structure of the raga in the way that **lighter** versions of **ragas** like Bhoopali or Malkaush are used. They employ a **lighter version** of **tala** and use **madhyam or dhrut** laya, that is they have a faster tempo. There is also greater emphasis on **bhava and lyrics** than **alap-jor-jhala**. Some of the prominent semi-classical styles such as thumri, tappa and ghazal are discussed next.

Thumri

Thumri originated in Uttar Pradesh, is usually based on **mixed simple ragas** and is commonly considered to be semi-classical Indian music. The compositions can be either **romantic or devotional** in nature. This style was inspired by the **Bhakti movement** so much so that the text usually revolves around a girl's love for Krishna. The language of the composition is usually **Hindi in the Braj Bhasha dialect**.

The compositions are usually sung by a **female**, which is different to other forms as thumri is characterised by its inherent sensuality. It also allows the singer to improvise during the performance, and so they have greater flexibility with the use of raga. Thumri is also used as a generic name for some other, even lighter, forms, such as Dadra, Hori, Kajari, Saavan, Jhoola and Chaiti.

Thumri is linked to the classical dance **Kathak**.

The main Gharanas of thumri are based in Varanasi and Lucknow, and one of the most timeless voices of thumri is that of **Begum Akhtar** who is a household name for her husky voice and boundless range in singing. Other famous proponents include **Girija Devi** and **Chhannulal Mishra** of the Purab Ang Thumri.

Tappa

In this style, the **rhythm** plays a very important role as the compositions are based on fast, and knotty constructions. It originated from the folk songs of the **camel riders of north-west India** but gained legitimacy as a semi-classical vocal specialty once it was brought to the Mughal court of Emperor **Muhammad Shah**.

There is a great use of **very quick turns of phrases**. Tappa was the genre of choice of the wealthy elite as well as those of more modest means. The *'baithaki'* style evolved under the direct patron-age of the elites of the zamindari classes of the late 19th and early 20th centuries in their baithak khanas (assembly halls) and jalsaghar (literally, halls for entertainment).

Today, the style is facing extinction as it is rarely used by musicians any longer. Some of the very few expounders of this style include *Laxmanrao Pandit of Gwalior Gharana* and *Shanno Khurana of Rampur-Sahaswan Gharana*.

Ghazal

The ghazal is a **short poem** consisting of **rhyming couplets**, called *Bayt or sher*. Most ghazals have between **7 and 12 bayts**. However, a ghazal's couplets do not need a common theme or continuity.

Ghazal is said to have originated in Iran in the 10th century, from where it spread to South Asia in the 12th century due to the influence of Sufi mystics and the courts of the new Islamic sultanate, reaching its zenith during the Mughal period. It is said that **Amir Khusrau** (1253–1325 AD) was one of the first expounders of the art of Ghazal in India. Many of the major historical Ghazal

poets were either avowed Sufis themselves (like Rumi or Hafiz) or were sympathisers with Sufi ideas and beliefs.

Ghazal not only has a specific form, but traditionally **deals with just one subject: love**, specifically an unconditional and superior form of love. The object of love is often written in a manner that makes it open to interpretation, where it may be divine or humanly, depending on what the listener construes. Gods are often personified too.

Ghulam Ali

Over the years, the ghazal has undergone some simplification in terms of words and phrasings, which has helped it to reach a larger audience around the world. Most ghazals are now sung in styles that are not limited to *khyal, thumri* and other classical and light classical genres. Some of the most famous performers associated with Ghazal are *Muhammad Iqbal, Mirza Ghalib,* and *Kazi Nazrul Islam (who introduced ghazals in the Bengali language), and so on.*

Carnatic Music

Carnatic music is mainly associated with **South India**. The main emphasis is on **vocal music** where most compositions are written to be sung. Most Carnatic compositions are either in Telugu, Kannada, Tamil or Sanskrit. Carnatic music is **kriti** based and focuses more on the sahitya or the quality of the lyrics of the musical piece. The Kriti is a highly evolved musical song set to a certain raga and fixed tala or rhythmic cycle. Like Hindustani music, Carnatic music is also based on two elements – raga and tala. Any composition in the Carnatic style has **several parts** to it:

* **Pallavi:** The first or second thematic lines of the composition are referred to as 'Pallavi'. This portion is often **repeated** in each stanza and is considered to be the 'Piece de Resistance' or the best part of the Carnatic composition called 'Ragam Thanam Pallavi', where the artist has great scope for improvisation.

* **Anu Pallavi:** Two lines, called Anu Pallavi, **follow the Pallavi** or first line. It is sung at the beginning and sometimes also towards the end of the song, but it is not necessary to repeat it after every stanza or Charanam.

* **Charana:** This is the final and longest verse, which concludes the song.

There are several other components of Carnatic music, for example, the **Swara-Kalpana**, which is an improvised section performed with a drummer in medium and fast paces. Carnatic music is usually played with **mridangam**. The piece of melodic improvisation in free rhythm with mridangam is called **'Tanam'**. However, those pieces which do not have a mridangam are called

'Ragam'. Purandara Dasa (1484–1564) is referred to as the Pitamaha or the father/grandfather of Carnatic music.

Early Proponents of Carnatic Music

Annamacharya (1408–1503)

- First known composer of Carnatic music:
- He composed sankirtanas in praise of **Lord Venkateswara**, a form of Lord Vishnu.
- His compositions were mainly in **Telugu**.
- He is widely recognised as the **'Grandfather of Telugu Song-writing'**.

Purandara Dasa (1484–1564)

- He was one of the founding proponents of Carnatic music.
- He was a devotee of **Lord Krishna**.
- He is widely referred to as the **'Pitamaha** or father/grandfather of Carnatic Music'.
- He is believed to be an avatar or incarnation of the sage **Narada**.
- His most famous composition includes Dasa Sahithya.

Kshetrayya (1600–80)

- Telugu poet and prominent composer of Carnatic music.
- He composed a number of Padams and Keertanas.
- His compositions were mainly based on **Lord Krishna**.
- He travelled extensively.
- His Padams are still sung today during **Bharatnatyam and Kuchipudi** performances.

Bhadrachala Ramadasu (1620–80)

- A famous proponent of **Carnatic music** and his compositions were mainly in praise of **Lord Rama** and mostly in the **Telugu language**.
- He was one of the famous **Vaggeyakaras** (i.e., composing the lyrics as well as setting them to music).
- Other Vaggeyakaras in Telugu include Annamacharya, Tyagaraja and Syama Sastri.

Venkatamakhin (17th century)

- He was a famous proponent of Carnatic music.
- He wrote **Chaturdandiprakashika** in which he introduced the **melakarta system** of classifying ragas.
- He was a devotee of Tyagesha, the presiding deity of Tiruvarur and composed 24 ashtapadis in his honour.

Trinity of Carnatic Music

Tyagaraja (1767–1847)

Muthuswami Dikshitar (1775–1835)

Syama Sastri (1762–1827)

(all three were born in Tiruvarur)

Tyagaraja	Muthuswami Dikshitar	Syama Sastri
Most compositions in **Telugu** and few in Sanskrit and in praise of **Lord Rama**.	Most compositions are in **Sanskrit** and relate to Hindu gods and temples.	Older than the other two. Compositions mainly in **Telugu** in praise of Goddess Kamakshi.
His very famous composition is **Pancharatna Kritis**.	He emphasised the use of Gamaka (ornamentation).	He composed less kritis as compared to the other two.
A crater on planet Mercury is named Tyagaraja.	His signature name was **Guruguha** which is also his mudra.	His signature or mudra was **Syama Krishna**.
Tyagaraja created several new ragas.	He was also a **Veena player**.	The **Svarajati** musical genre can be attributed to him.

Points of Difference	Hindustani Music	Carnatic Music
Influence	Arab, Persian and Afghan	Indigenous
	Scope for artists to improvise, hence scope for variations	Less scope for improvisation
	There are several sub-styles which led to the emergence of 'Gharanas'	Only one particular prescribed style of singing
Instruments	Instruments equally important as vocals	More emphasis on vocal music
	Six major ragas	Two types of ragas – melakarta ragas or parent ragas (72) and janya ragas or child ragas
Emphasis on	Mainly based on Ragas	Mainly based on Tala or Taal
Major Instruments used	Tabla, sarangi, sitar and santoor	Veena, mridangam and mandolin
Association to Parts of India	North India	Usually, south India
Commonalities between the two	Flute and violin	Flute and violin

Swathi Thirunal (1813–46)

- He was maharaja of the kingdom of **Travancore**.
- He was an excellent music composer **both in Hindustani and Carnatic style**.
- He was **contemporary to** the trinity of Carnatic music.
- The **Thanjavur Quartet** brothers were musicians in his court.
- On his early death, the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland mourned and quoted *"The early death of this enlightened and princely patron of true science, is a subject of just regret."*
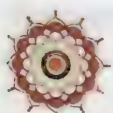
Important Books/Treatise on Indian Music

Name	Written by and around	Details
Samaveda	Vyasa (1000 BC)	It includes scriptures set to music.
Dattilam	Dattila (4th century BCE–2nd century CE)	The text discusses the transition from ritual chants to gandharva music.
Natyasastra	Bharata (2nd century BC)	This is the earliest literature about music written in Sanskrit. It covers a wide range of musical topics such as Shruti, Swara, Jati, various types of musical instruments, etc.
Silappadikaram	Illango (2nd century AD)	This is a Tamil poem which explains the religious, social, political, cultural and economic set-ups of the three southern kingdoms – Chera, Chola and Pandya. There is an endless stream of informative musical material within.
Brihaddesi	Matanga (6th–8th centuries)	This is a work in Sanskrit that explains aspects such as Nada, Shruti, Swara, Tana, Alankara, Raga, etc.
Sangita Makaranda	Narada (9th century)	This deals with the treatment of Ragas and categorising them as male, female and neuter.
Sarasvati Hridyalankara	Nanyadeva (1080 CE)	It illustrates the theory of music.
Abhjilashitarta Chintamani	Someshwara (Chalukyan king – 12th century)	Here, musical aspects such as the qualities of a singer, composer, the auditorium, the voice, Alapana, Gamaka and so on are covered in great detail.
Sangita Samayasara	Parsvadeva (1200 CE)	It puts forward the theory of gamakas.
Gita Govinda	Jayadeva (12th century)	This describes the relationship between Krishna and Radhika and the gopikas of Vrindavana. It also elaborates on the eight moods of Heroine (Ashta Nayika), later frequently used in Indian classical dances. Regarding music, it indicates the exact raga and tala in which to sing each of the songs.
Sangita Ratnakara	Sarngadeva (13th century)	Ocean of Music and Dance. It is one of the most important Sanskrit texts of ancient and medieval musical knowledge and is regarded as a definitive text by both Hindustani and Carnatic music traditions.
Sangeeta Sudhakara	Haripala (14th century AD)	The terms Carnatic and Hindustani are found for the first time in this text.
Chaturdandiprakashika	Venkatamakhin (17th century)	In this text, the melakarta system of classifying ragas under Carnatic music is introduced.
Sangraha Choodamani	Govindacharya (18th century)	This text was written in Sanskrit and deals with the current system of Carnatic music.
Sangita Darpana	Damodara Misra (17th century)	Mirror of Music. This is a Sanskrit treatise and has seven chapters.

Folk Music

India is a geographically diverse nation, and that diversity is also reflected in the Indian culture. Each state has its own form of music that is the basis of its cultural affirmation. While the classical music follows the rules as laid down in the *Natyashastra* and cultivates a *guru-shishya* (student–mentor) tradition, the folk tradition is the music of the people and has no hard and fast rules.

They are based on diverse themes and are full of musical rhythm. They are also set on beats so that they can be **dance oriented**. There are several types of folk music associated with each state.

Baul

This is not only a type of music, but also a **Bengali** religious sect. The music of the Bauls, Baul Sangeet, is a particular type of folk song. Its lyrics carry influences of the Hindu **Bhakti movements and the Suphi**, a form of Sufi song exemplified by the songs of Kabir, and is called the 'Baul Gaan' or Baul song.

This music represents a long heritage of preaching **mysticism** through songs in West Bengal, Assam and Tripura. They mainly belong to either Vaishnava Hindu or Sufi Muslim sects. The prominent exponents of this music include *Yotin Das, Purno Chandra Das,* **Lalon Fakir***, Naboni Das and Sanatan Das Thakur Baul.*

A Baul Singer

awan

is the folk music from **Jammu and Kashmir**. It is most commonly sung during **wedding** remonies and is considered auspicious.

Pandavani

This type of folk music is based on the grand epic **Mahabharata**, with **Bhima as the hero**. It includes *gayan* (singing) and *vadan* (playing an instrument), with the songs usually set to the rhythm of a **tambura**. One of the most well-known artists of this form of music is **Teejanbai** from **Chhattisgarh** who won the Padma Shri (1987), Padma Bhushan (2003) and also Padma Vibhushan (2019) for her contribution to this musical field.

Teejanbai

Alha

This musical form is from **Madhya Pradesh** and uses **heroic ballad song** with intricate words. It can be sung in different languages such as Braj, Awadhi and Bhojpuri. This form is also related to the epic **Mahabharata** and aims to glorify the heroes who are seen as the reincarnations of the Pandavas. The five brothers of the Pandavas are substituted here as Alha, Udal, Malkhan, Lakhan and Deva.

Panihari

This musical form is from the state of **Rajasthan** and is thematically **related to water**. The songs are generally about **women fetching water** from a nearby well and carrying the water back to their households in *matkas* over their heads. The songs usually describe the scarcity of water and the long distance between the well and the village. Sometimes the songs also talk about the daily concerns of the village women who are clustered around the village well.

Panihari

The songs also occasionally concentrate on a chance encounter between lovers, hence they also can be romantic in nature. They also discuss the contentious relationship between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law.

Ovi

This form of music is from **Maharashtra** and **Goa**, and usually includes **songs by women,** that is they are sung by women during their leisure time and when they are completing their household work. The songs usually contain four short lines of poetry, and are usually written for marriages, pregnancies and also as lullabies for children.

Pai Songs

These songs are mostly from **Madhya Pradesh**. They are sung during **festivals**, especially those that fall during the **rainy season**. These songs generally plead for a *'good monsoon and a good harvest'* as these are the songs of farmer communities. Generally, the *Saira dance* is performed to Pai music.

Lavani

This is one of the most famous folk dance forms from **Maharashtra**. It is also one of the most popular genres of music in Maharashtra.

It is a combination of traditional dance and song that is performed usually to the beats of the Dholki, which is a **percussion instrument**. The music is unique, and it is also perfect for dancing as it has a **powerful rhythm** and beats, which helps to ensure that everyone dances merrily.

Lavani

Maand

This folk music is from the state of **Rajasthan**, and is said to have been developed in the royal courts and hence it is also recognised in the classical circles. It is neither accepted as a full-fledged Raga nor reckoned to be among the freely rendered folk songs. The songs are usually about the

bards singing to the **glory of the Rajput rulers**. It is considered close to Thumri or Ghazal, and the famous song **Kesariya Balam** is in Maand style.

Powada

This is also a folk type from the state of **Maharashtra**. There are usually ballads sung for the **heroes** of the past, such as **Shivaji**. These songs describe the events of their glorious past and their heroic deeds.

Khongjom Parba

This is an important type of folk music from the state of **Manipur**. It is a popular ballad genre, which is a musical narration of the **battle of Khongjom** fought between the British army and the Manipuri resistance forces in 1891.

Bhavageete

These are emotional songs that are very popular amongst the populations of **Karnataka** and **Maharashtra**. Musically, they are very **close to the Ghazals** and are sung on a **slower pitch**. They are usually composed on themes around nature, love and philosophy.

Mando

This is popular in **Goa** and is a unique blend of Indian and Western musical traditions. Instruments used in Mando music include guitars, violins and the ghumot drum.

Kolannalu or Kolattam

This is a popular music and dance combination from **Andhra Pradesh**. It is **similar to 'Dandiya'** or **'Stick dance'**. It is an ancient dance form and involves rhythmic movements. The dancers generally move in **two circles**.

Kolattam

Tamang Selo

The main traditional style of folk music in **Sikkim** is the Tamang Selo. This music is performed by the **Tamang** community with the rhythmic sound of **'Dhamphu'**.

Other major **folk music traditions** from India include:

Name of the Music	State of Origin	Major Themes
Sohar	Bihar	Sung during childbirth
Zikir	Assam	Embodies the teaching of Islam
Ja-jin-ja	Arunachal Pradesh	Sung during marriages
Nyioga	Arunachal Pradesh	Sung at the end of the marriage ceremony
Heliamleu	Nagaland	Dancing songs

Name of the Music	State of Origin	Major Themes
Neuleu	Nagaland	Songs about legends and myths
Hereileu	Nagaland	War songs
Hekaileu	Nagaland	Songs about oneself
Dollu Kunitha (Drum Dance)	Karnataka	Named after the Dollu-a percussion instrument and performed by people from the Kuruba community
Nattupura Paattu	Tamil Nadu	Consists of village folk music and city folk music
Pala and Daskathia	Odisha	Ballads of a religious nature
Manganiars	North-west India	Songs about Alexander, local kings and battles
Dhadi	Punjab	Ballads about bravery
Basant Geet	Garhwal, Uttarakhand	Sung during the Basant Panchami festival
Villu Pattu	Tamil Nadu	Religious; conquest of good over evil
Sukar ke Biah	Bihar	Celebrating love between cosmological deities – Shukra and Brihaspati
Saikuti Zai	Mizoram	Praise of brave men, hunters, etc.
Lai Haraoba Ishei	Manipur	Sung by the Meitei people during Lai Haraoba festival and related to the religion Sanamahism
Veeragase	Karnataka	During Dusshera procession
Chhakri	Kashmir	Fairy tales, love stories
Bhuta song	Kerala	Songs against evils and ghosts
Khubakeshei	Manipur	A song accompanied entirely by clapping
Jhumair	Eastern States	This is quite popular among the tea-tribes of Assam
Borgeet	Assam	Initially composed by Sankardeva and Madhavdeva in the 15th–16th centuries and associated with Ekasarana Dharma
Jhoori	Himachal Pradesh	This song celebrates an extramarital romance
Chai hla	Mizoram	Songs of Chai Dance
Laman	Himachal Pradesh	Love songs from Kullu valley
Sankirtana	Manipur	Ritual singing, drumming and dancing mainly by Vaishnava community there
Oi Nitom	Assam	Love songs by the Mising tribal community
Dihanaam	Assam	Sung by women in praise of the Assamese saint Sankardev
Pankhida	Rajasthan	Sung by farmers working in the fields
Ghasiyari Geet	Uttarakhand	Sung by women while going to forests with an emphasis on the importance of labour
Ammanaivari	Tamil Nadu	Sung by women while playing with a ball and in praise of the Chola monarch
Sana Lamok	Manipur	Sung at the time of a coronation ceremony by the Maaiba (priest) or when welcoming a new king
Kajri	Uttar Pradesh	Sung by women during the rainy season.

Name of the Music	State of Origin	Major Themes
Hori	Uttar Pradesh	Based on the love pranks of Radha–Krishna and mainly associated with the Holi festival
Lotia	Rajasthan	Sung in the chaitra month where women bring lotas and kalash filled with water from ponds and wells

Fusion of Classical and Folk Music

Over time, classical music and folk music intermingle and other forms emerge, which take elements from both types. Usually, it takes devotional music to bring these two types of music together as both the royalty and commoners patronise the deities, and hence the songs combine both genres. Some of these styles are described next.

Bhajan

These are amongst the most popular devotional singing types present in north India. They originated with the **Bhakti movement**, as the saints would take the message of God to the people through orally, that is through **singing hymns**. The lyrics are set to simple melodies, generally sung in one or more raga. Stories about the lives of Gods and Goddesses or from the Mahabharata and the Ramayana are popular subjects for bhajans.

The bhajans are usually accompanied by musical instruments such as the chimta, dholak, dafli and manjira. The major expounders of the bhajans in the medieval period included **Meerabai, Tulsidas, Surdas** and **Kabir**. Currently, people gather in temples or have concerts at home to sing bhajans. Amongst the most famous bhajan singers of all time are Anup Jalota and Anuradha Paudwal.

Shabad

With the rise of **Sikhism**, many devotional songs dedicated to the gurus were su **Gurudwaras**. Historians suggest that Guru Nanak and his disciple Mardana were responsible for the development and popularity of Shabad. Currently, there are three types of Shabad singing, raga-based Shabad singing, traditional shabad as mentioned in the Adi Granth and the lighter ones. The holy text **Guru Granth Sahib** is organised by chapter in ragas, with each chapter containing many shabads of that raga.

Qawwali

This is also a kind of devotional music used **in praise of** the Allah or the Prophet Muhammad or any other major Sufi or Islamic saint.

It is **composed of a single raga** and is generally written in Urdu, Punjabi or Hindi. Some words of Brajbhasa and Awadhi are also used.

They are performed in Sufi shrines.
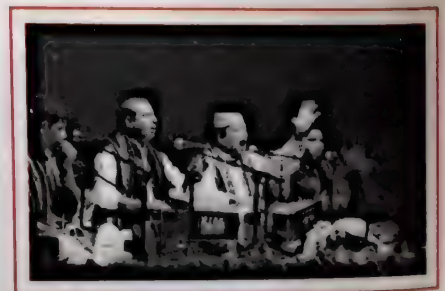
Qawwali

Qawwali is usually sung as a solo or in groups with two lead singers and a team comprising of around eight members.

Musical instruments including the tabla, dholak and harmonium are used. The intensity or **tempo gradually builds up**, seeking to induce a transcendental state.

Amir Khusrau has been credited as the originator of Qawwali but this has been widely disputed. Major Qawwals include the Sabri Brothers, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and Aziz Warsi.

> It is believed that **Amir Khusrau** invented a musical instrument called the **Sehtar** (a three-stringed instrument).

Some other types of Classical and Folk fusion are:

Name	State of Origin	Purpose
Abhanga	Maharashtra	In praise of the God Vithobha. Songs composed and sung by Tukaram, Namdev, etc.
Bhatiali	West Bengal	About nature and daily life and sung by boat drivers
Tevaram	Tamil Nadu	Sung by the Shaivite community, such as the Oduyars
Kirtan	West Bengal	Involves singing and dancing and takes inspiration from the Gita Govinda
ana Sangeetham	Kerala	Originated in temples, with the theme being religious in nature

Rabindra Sangeet

This is one of the most famous methods of composing music in Bengal, which recreates the music produced by the Nobel Laureate **Rabindranath Tagore**. The music is a mixture of classical elements and Bengali folk strains. There are more than **2000** Rabindra Sangeet presently sung and performed by music lovers in Bengal. The themes of this sangeet range from worship of the one true God, devotion to nature and its beauty, love and a celebration of life. One of the most prominent emotions in Rabindra Sangeet was also the strain of patriotism and placing the nation above one's own needs.
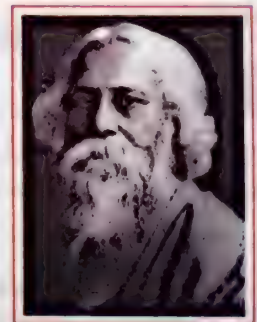
Nobel Laureate,
Rabindranath Tagore

Gana Sangeet

This is a form of fusion music sung in **choirs or groups** and in large numbers. The most common form of Gana Sangeet is songs reflecting **patriotic feelings**. They also include songs of **protest** against issues in society. And they generally try to carry a **social message**, for example, urging people to the exploitation of women and children, etc. One of the most popular examples of Gana Sangeet is the Indian national song, *Vande Mataram*, which is sung in praise of the country.

Haveli Sangeet

This genre of music was developed mostly in **Rajasthan and Gujarat** but is now found in many parts of the country. It was originally meant to be sung in temples but can now be performed outside the temple. It is currently practiced by a community known as the **Pushtimarg Sampradaya** or the community that believes in Pushtimarg as the way to achieve salvation.
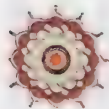
Musical Instruments

For any music to be created, one needs to have some musical instruments. There are four major traditional categories of musical instruments, which are as follows:

Awanad/Avanaddha Vadya

These are the **membranophone** instruments that contain an outer membrane, which is beaten to produce a particular musical sound. They are also known as **percussion instruments** as one has to **strike** them to generate a musical sound.

Membranophone

They generally have one or two faces covered with skin. The most ancient amongst this class are the Bhumi Dundubhi or earth drums.

The most common musical instruments included under this category include the *Tabla*, *Drum*, *Dhol*, *Congo* and *Mridangam*. While the Tabla accompanies most Hindustani classical vocals, the Mridangam is the instrument that normally accompanies Carnatic musical performances.

Sushira Vadya

These are **aerophones**, which include all the **wind instruments**. The most common instruments in this category include the *Bansuri (flute)*, *Shehnai*, *Pungi*, and *Ninkirns*.

One of the most common yet difficult to play instruments in this category is the **Shehnai**, which is a double-reeded wind instrument with a widening tube towards the end. It is one of the oldest wind instruments in India.

Wind Instruments

The exalted title of the 'Shehnai King' has been given to the legendary **Ustad Bismillah Khan**, who took Shehnai to its peak

through his soulful play. One of the most common instruments that can be found in almost every household is the flute, which has been used since the Vedic period. It was initially called the *Nadi or Tunava*, and became a revered object when the image of Lord Krishna playing a flute became an icon of the Hindu imagination. One of the most famous Indian flutists is **Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia**.

Ghana Vadya

This is the genre of the **non-drum percussion instruments** that do not require tuning. They are also called the **Idiophone instruments**. The most popular examples of Ghana Vadya include the **Manjira**, **Jaltarang**, Kanch-tarang, Ghungroo, Ghatam (earthenware pot drum) and Khartal.

The Manjira or Jhanj is a small brass cymbal that is generally used in religious ceremonies. Archaeological excavations have dated Manjira from as far back as the Harappan civilisation. The purpose of these instruments is to keep rhythm and time with the song that is being sung.

Manjira

Tata Vadya

These are the **chordophones** or **string instruments** that function best when their sound is modified by hand. There are three major types of tata instruments:

(a) **Bowed:** The instruments where the sound is created by drawing a bow across the strings, for example, the Sarangi, Esraj/Dilruba and Violin.

Sitar

(b) **Plectral:** The instruments where the strings are plucked by the fingers or by a plectrum of wire or horn, for example, Sitar, Veena, Tanpura and Guitar.

(c) Those instruments that are struck by a small hammer or a pair of sticks, for example, the Gotuvadyam and Swaramandal.

India has produced several outstanding artists in the field of *tata* instruments. The Bhangash family were considered to be the pioneers of Sarod in the 20th century. There are several Gharanas for playing the Sitar, for example, Jaipur, Varanasi and Etawah (Imaad Khani) Gharanas. The Veena, which is one of the most ancient and revered instruments, belongs to Goddess Saraswati.

Santoor

The Santoor is a **100-stringed instrument** *and has been a traditional instrument of* **Jammu and Kashmir** *since ancient times.* **Sufiana kalam** *music is accompanied by a Santoor.*

Folk Musical Instruments

Chordophones

- **Tumbi:** This is played during Bhangra in Punjab.
- **Ektara or Tun Tuna:** This is a one-stringed instrument played by wandering monks.
- **Dotara:** This is a two-stringed instrument used by Bauls.
- **Chikara:** This is a bowed instrument used in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.
- **Dilruba or Esraj:** This is an accompanying instrument used in Punjab and during Rabindra Sangeet in eastern India.
- **Onavillu:** This is from Kerala and is made of bamboo.
- **Sarinda:** This is an important tribal instrument and is used by Santhals in eastern India and is also used in Rajasthan and Assam. It is like a Sarangi.
- **Tingteila:** This is a rare instrument similar to the violin, and is from Nagaland.
- **Kamaicha:** It is a bowed instrument, frequently used in Rajasthani folk music by the Manganiyar community.

Aerophones

- **Pungi or Been:** This is used by snake charmers, and is made up of a dried bottle gourd and two bamboo sticks.
- **Algoza:** This is a double flute and is a popular folk instrument of north west India, especially Punjab.
- **Tangmuri:** This is a folk instrument of the Khasi hill people of Meghalaya.
- **Titti:** This is like a bagpipe, and is made of goat skin. They are made in south India, especially Kerala and Andhra Pradesh.
- **Mashak:** This is an important folk instrument of the Garhwal region in Uttarakhand, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
- **Gogona:** This is made from bamboo and is used in the Bihu festival in Assam.
- **Ejuk Tapung:** This is a rare instrument similar to a snake charmer's flute and is from Assam.

Membranophones

- **Ghumot:** This is like a drum and is played during the Ganesh festival in Goa.
- **Idakka:** This is like a Damru and is from Kerala.
- **Udukai:** This is an hour-glass-shaped instrument like the Damru from Tamil Nadu.
- **Sambal:** This is like drum and is played with sticks in the Konkan region of Maharashtra.
- **Tamak:** This is an important instrument of the Santhal tribe. It is a two-headed drum that is beaten with drum sticks.
- **Diggi:** This is a folk drum from the Ghariya village of Uttar Pradesh.

Idiophones

- **Chimta:** This instrument evolved from fire tongs, and is used in Punjab.
- **Gharha:** These are earthen pots that are used in the folk music of Punjab.
- **Andelu:** This is used in Burra-Katha, and consists of a pair of hollow metal rings.
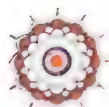
Modern Developments in Music

The process of the development of music has been unceasing since its inception during the early historic period. In the 21st century, many upgrades have been made to the booming music industry. There are institutions that teach music to students and provide them with the theoretical and academic backgrounds to the subject. An increase in the number of institutions that showcase artists to the general public by holding open shows can be seen. Some of the important developments are described next.

Gandharva Mahavidyalaya

V.D. Paluskar set up a school in **1901** with the express purpose of teaching and transmitting the knowledge of **Indian classical music and dance** to future generations. Initially, it was opened in **Lahore** but it was **moved to Mumbai** in 1915. The focus of the *mahavidyalaya* is on the Hindustani and Carnatic classical forms of music.

Prayag Sangeet Samiti

This was established in **1926** at **Allahabad (now Prayagraj)** to impart education on **Hindustani Classical music**.

Marris College of Music

This is one of the premier institutes for studying classical music in India. The legendary musicologist **Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande** founded it in **1926**. He returned to his hometown of **Lucknow** to establish this school, which was to concentrate on the theory of music as well as the practice of singing and playing instruments. It was later renamed the **Bhatkhande Music Institute Deemed University**.

Sangeet Natak Akademi

The Sangeet Natak Akademi was the first national academy set up for the performing arts by the Government of India in **1952**. The major focus of the academy was to create a set-up for

music, drama and dances in India. It was supposed to be the primary body for showcasing the **performing** arts in the country. It also had the significant task of promoting the enormous intangible heritage of India as demonstrated through its music, dance and drama.

SPIC MACAY

Dr Kiran Seth established the community of SPIC MACAY in **1977**. The full name of this organisation is the *'Society for the Promotion of Indian Classical Music and Culture Amongst Youth.'* It began as a voluntary youth movement that grew into a platform to showcase the culture of India to the general public, especially the younger generations which had been losing touch with their Indian classical roots.

SPIC MACAY

The basic reasoning behind this organisation is to promote Indian classical music, dance, yoga, meditation and other aspects of Indian culture. The organisation targets laypeople and the youth by holding many free-entry events. It has slowly grown into a behemoth organisation that has **a large number of chapters or branches all across the globe** (with its headquarters in Delhi).

Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar (1872–1931)

*He was an eminent Hindustani musician who sang the original version of the bhajan Raghupati Raghava Raja Ram. He set up the **Gandharva Mahavidyalaya** in 1901. Pandit Paluskar has been credited for arranging India's national song, Vande Mātaram and composing the song in **Raga 'Kafi'**. He also introduced the scheme of Raga classification in Indian music.*

Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande (1860–1936)

He was an eminent musicologist. He composed the first modern treatise on Hindustani classical music. He introduced the modern thaat system of the Hindustani classical music.

His major contributions includ Hindustani Sangeet Paddhati, Sreemallaksya Sangeetam, Abhinava Raga Manjari, A Short Historical Survey of the Music of Upper India, etc.

Communities Related to Music

Community	State	Details
Langha (Muslim Tribal Community)	Gujarat and Rajasthan	Entertain Muslim Rajputs by praising them through songs
Manganiar or Merasi (Muslim Community)	Rajasthan	Use an instrument, the Kamaicha, to accompany classical folk music and songs

Community	State	Details
Karta Bhajas	West Bengal	There are four classes which indulge in chanting mantras leading to perfection, as per their belief
Bauls	West Bengal	Mystic group of singers in the countryside. They are one of the classes of Kartabhaja
Jogi	Rajasthan	Jogi community are followers of the Nath sect.
Bhopa	Rajasthan	It involves a male artiste called 'Bhopa' and another female artiste addressed as 'Bhopi', singing religious hymns.
Barot, Charan, Gadhvi	Gujarat	They are mainly into story telling with or without music.
Muria tribes	Chhattisgarh	Sing songs called Relo
Kamar Community	Chhattisgarh	Marriage song
Baghela	Madhya Pradesh	Semi-historical songs devoted to the Hardaul deity
Pulayar hill tribes	Tamil Nadu	They perform melodies called talams
Idu Mishmis	Arunachal Pradesh	They perform ritual dances and fertility dances
Moken Tribe	Andaman and Nicobar	They have no religion and perform only ancestor worship. They perform a ritual tribal dance
Bazigar (Goaar) Community	Punjab	They perform in festivals and other occasions, displaying strength, balance and courage

Chaturprahar

Chaturprahar is an annual Indian classical music festival held at the National Centre for Performing Arts in Mumbai. It is based on the concept of association of time with the ragas.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

* **Gandharva Veda** – this is called the science of music – Upaveda of Sama Veda – all seven notes of the raga Kharaharapriya can be found in Sama Veda.

* The first reference to musical theory was discussed in **Bharata's Natyashastra**, which was compiled between 200 BC and 200 AD.

* **Chaturdandiprakashika** – this includes information on Carnatic musicology, especially melakarta ragas, and was written by Venkatmakhin in the 17th century.

* **Three main pillars** – of Indian music – Raga, Tala and Swara.

* **Swara** – note or scale degree – Bharata, in Natyashastra, divided the swaras into 22 notes scale – notational system of the Hindustani music defined by seven abbreviated swaras or Saptak or Sargams – *Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni*.

- **Raga** – this forms the basis of melody – based on the number of notes, there being three main categories of ragas – Audav Raga (five notes) – Shadava Raga (six notes) – Sampurna Raga (seven notes).
- **Tala** – rhythmic groupings of beats – rhythmical cycles range from three to 108 beats – made of three components: *laghu, dhrutam* and *anu dhrutam*.
- **Thaat** – this is only sung in aarohi as the notes are composed in ascending order – no emotional quality.
- **Indian Classical Music** – has two distinct schools: Hindustani music and Carnatic music – historical roots can be traced to Bharata's *Natyashastra*.
- **Hindustani music** – this has been influenced by Arab, Persian and Afghan – presence of substyles called gharanas – scope for variations.
- **Carnatic music** – kriti based – focused on sahitya – usually played with a mridangam – it is indigenous and has less scope for improvisation.
- **Folk music** – this is not derived from Natyashastra – is described as the music of the people – set on beats – examples include Baul, Pandavani, Alha, Panihari and Dandiya.
- **Bhajan** – owes its origin to the Bhakti Movement – fusion of classical and folk – message from God to the people – expounders of the medieval period included Meerabai, Tulsidas, Surdas and Kabir.
- **Gandjarva Mahavidyalaya** – set up in 1901 by V.D. Paluskar for Indian Classical music and dance – it originally opened in Lahore but was moved to Mumbai in 1915.
- **SPIC MACAY** – established by Dr. Kiran Seth in 1977 – voluntary youth movement to showcase the culture of India – headquarters in Delhi.
- **Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar (1872–1931)** – an eminent Hindustani musician who sang the original version of the bhajan Raghupati Raghava Raja Ram – he set up the **Gandharva Mahavidyalaya** in 1901.
- **Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande (1860–1936)** – an eminent musicologist – composed the first modern treatise on Hindustani classical music.

CHAPTER 10

INDIAN DANCE FORMS
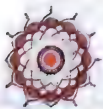
Background

As the story goes in **Bharata's Natya Shastra** (200 BC–200 AD), when Lord Brahma was requested by the gods to create a pastime, he combined certain aspects of the four Vedas and created a fifth Veda known as the **Natya Veda**. *Natya* is an amalgamation of dance, drama and music and included *Paathya* (words) from the Rig Veda, *Abhinaya* (gestures) from the Yajur Veda, *Geet* (music) from Sama Veda and *Rasa* (emotions) from the Atharva Veda.

To access online video related to this chapter, scan this QR code

This highlights the divine importance attached to dance in the Indian cultural tradition. From Shiva's *Tandava* dance, which signifies the cycle of creation, preservation and destruction, to the feminine response of Parvati, Indian mythology is replete with examples of dance forms and expressions. Similarly, the engravings of **community dancing at the Bhimbetka rock shelters** in Madhya Pradesh and the sculpture of the **Bronze dancing girl** (Mohenjo-daro) of the Harappan Civilisation highlights the importance of dance as a means of social entertainment.

The first formal mention of dance is found in Bharata's famous work **Natya Shastra,** which is a comprehensive and vivid treatise on the various facets of Indian classical dance. The work was compiled probably between **200 BC** and **200 AD** and describes in detail the techniques, postures, emotions, ornaments, stage and even the audience. Bharata Muni describes dance as the **'complete art'** encompassing within its scope all other forms of art – music, sculpture, poetry and drama.

Aspects of Dance

As per the *Natya Shastra*, there are two basic aspects of Indian classical dance:

- **Lasya** – It denotes grace, *bhava*, *rasa* and *abhinaya*. It is symbolic to the **feminine** features of dance as an art form.

- **Tandava** – This is symbolic to the **male aspects** of dance and has more emphasis on *rhythm* and *movement*.

As per *Abhinaya Darpana (5th–4th century BC)*, **Nandikeshvara's** famous treatise on dance, an act has been broken into three basic elements:

1. **Nritta** – It refers to the basic dance steps, performed rhythmically but **devoid of any expression** or mood.

2. **Natya** – It means **dramatic representations** and refers to the story that is elaborated through the dance recital.

3. **Nritya** – It refers to the sentiment and the emotions evoked through dance. It includes the mime and the different methods of expression including *mudras* in the dance.

Nandikeshvara further elaborates the *Nayaka-Nayika Bhav*, in which the eternal deity is seen as the hero or *Nayaka*, and the devotee who performs the dance is the heroine of the act, the *Nayika*. There are **nine rasas** or emotions that are expressed through the dance.

1. **Shringara** *for love*
2. **Roudra** *for anger*
3. **Bibhatsa** *for disgust*
4. **Veera** *for heroism*
5. **Shanta** *for peace and tranquility*
6. **Haasya** *for laughter and comedy*
7. **Karuna** *for sorrow and compassion*
8. **Bhayanaka** *for horror*
9. **Adbhuta** *for wonder*
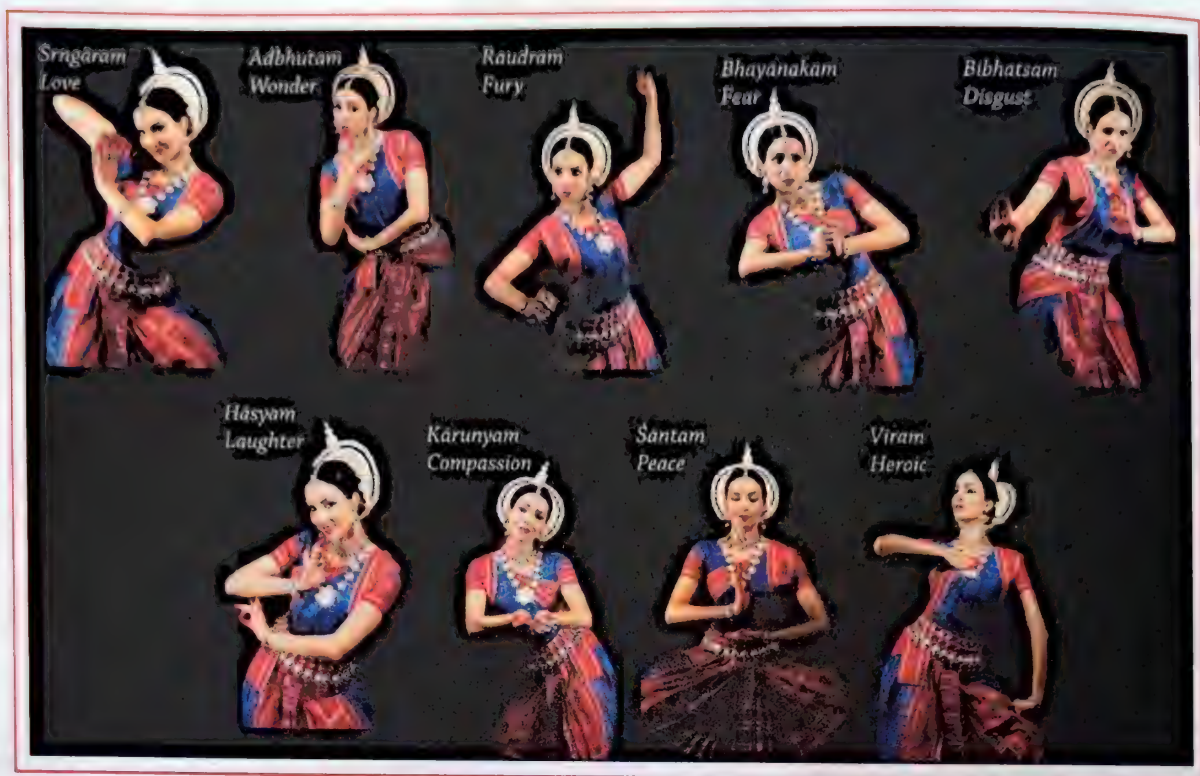
Prominent Mudras Involved in Indian Dance Forms Depicting Emotions

These moods and expressions are emoted through the use of **mudras** – a combination of **hand gestures** and **body postures**. There are 108 fundamental *mudras*, a combination of which is used to depict a particular emotion.
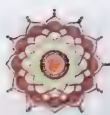
Indian Classical Dance Forms

Distinct styles of dance have evolved in different regions of India, each with their own specific nuances. However, all these dance forms are governed by the basic rules and guidelines laid down in the *Natya Shastra*, the principal rule being that true transfer of knowledge can only come through a guru. The guru passes on the knowledge of the different traditions – *sampradayas* – onto the disciple. This '*guru-shishya parampara*' forms the core of Indian classical art form.

Presently, as per the **Sangeet Natak Akademi**, there exist **eight classical dance forms** in India, which include *Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Kathakali, Mohiniyattam, Odissi, Manipuri, Kathak* and *Sattriya*.
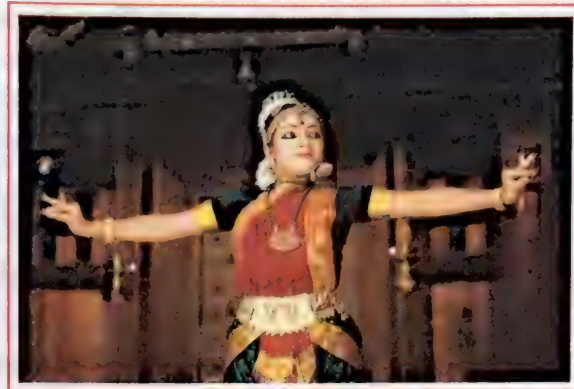
Bharatanatyam

Oldest among all classical dance forms, Bharatanatyam derives its name from 'Bharata Muni' and 'natyam' which means dance in Tamil. However, other scholars have ascribed the name 'Bharata' to 'Bhava', 'Raga' and 'Taal'.
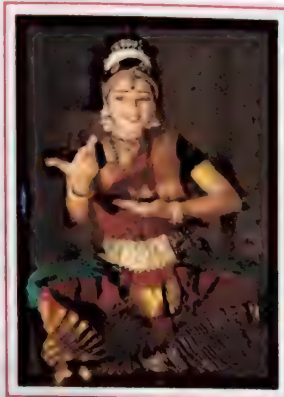
(a)   (b)

Bharatanatyam

The origin of this dance form can be traced back to 'Sadir' – the solo dance performance of the temple dancers or *'devadasis'* in **Tamil Nadu**, hence it was also referred to as 'Dashiattam'.

With the decline of the Devadasi system, the art too became nearly extinct. However, the efforts of **E. Krishna Iyer** (1897–1968), a prominent freedom fighter, revived this dance form. Previously, this dance form was performed by solo female dancers; it has since become increasingly popular among male and group artists as well. **Rukmini Devi Arundale** (1904–86), another famous proponent of Bharatanatyam, is remembered for giving global recognition to the dance.

In the early 19th century, four dance teachers of Thanjavur defined the elements of a Bharatanatyam recital. They are as follows:

* **Alarippu** (flowering bud) – It is an invocatory piece of performance which includes basic dance postures and is accompanied with rhythmic syllables. It symbolises offering of respects to God, the guru and the audience and to seek the blessings of God. It is the first dance piece in Bharatanatyam performance.

* **Jatiswaram** – It is the Nritta component and is devoid of expressions, and it includes different poses and movements.

* **Shabdam** – It is the dramatic element with expressed words, which includes the *abhinaya* in the song. It is generally in praise of the glory of God.

* **Varnam** – It is the Nritya component. It is a combination of dance and emotions, and is the most important part of the whole performance. It is synchronised with tala and raag, to express the story.

* **Padam** – It refers to a mastery over the abhinaya (expression) of the spiritual message, by the artist. Music becomes light, dance becomes emotional.

* **Jawali** – These are short love-lyrics performed at a faster tempo.

* **Thillana** – It is the concluding stage of the performance, and comprises pure dance (Nritta) with exuberant movement and intricate rhythmic variations.

The four Thanjavur teachers, known as the **'Tanjore quartet'**, are *Chinnaiah, Ponniah, Vadivelu* and *Sivanandam*. Under them, Bharatanatyam also came to be known as **Tanjore Natyam**.

* Bharatanatyam is often referred to as the **'fire dance'**, as it is the manifestation of fire in the human body. Most of the movements in Bharatanatyam resemble that of a *dancing flame*. The dance comprises of 'Adavu' (steps) and 'Hastamudra' (hand postures). The 'Bhavabhinaya' (facial expression) is an important part of communication. At the beginning of the performance, Ganapati and Nataraja are worshipped. The costume of men comprises of jacket and pajamas of Kanchipuram silk, and the costume of women is made of Benarasi silk.

* In this dance form, **equal emphasis** is given to both the **Tandava and Lasya** aspects of dance, with major emphasis on 'mudras'.

* One of the principal *mudras* is **'Katakamukha Hasta'** in which three fingers are joined to symbolise 'Om'.

* In a Bharatanatyam recital, the **knees are mostly bent,** and the weight is equally distributed across both the feet.

* Bharatanatyam is also characterised by the **'Ekcharya lasyam'** style in which one dancer plays many different roles. The main musical instruments used in Bharatanatyam performance are mridangam, veena, flute, etc.

Katakamukha Hasta

Famous proponents: Yamini Krishnamurthy, Lakshmi Viswanathan, Padma Subramanyam, Mrinalini Sarabhai, Mallika Sarabhai, Alarmel Valli, etc.
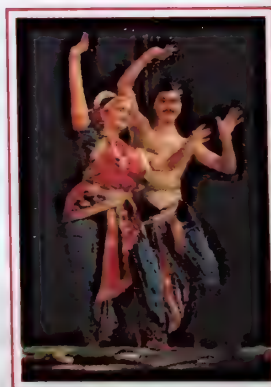
Kuchipudi

Originally performed by a group of actors going from village to village, known as *Kusselavas,* Kuchipudi derives its name from the village of Kusselavapuri or Kuchelapuram in **Andhra Pradesh**. **Siddhendra Yogi** (*believed to have lived around 11th century*) formalised and systemised the tradition by making this dance form more distinct and elegant by adopting the format of Yakshagana folk dance dramas. He authored *Bhama Kalapam* and many other plays.

(a)　　　　(b)

(a) Kuchipudi, (b) Tarangam in Kuchipudi

With the advent of Vaishnavism, the dance form became a monopoly of the *male Brahmins* and began to be performed at temples. Stories of the *Bhagavata Purana* became a central theme of the recitals, and the dancers came to be known as Bhagavathalus. The dance form gained prominence under the patronage of the Vijayanagara and Golconda rulers.

However, it remained confined to villages and remained obscure till the advent of the 20th century, when **Balasaraswati** and **Ragini Devi** revived this dance form. Lakshminarayan Sastri, in the early 20th century, brought in new practices such as solo recitals and female participation.

Some of the features of Kuchipudi dance are as follows:

* It involves difficult foot movements, and is generally a team performance.
* Most of the Kuchipudi recitals are based on stories of the *Bhagavata Purana* but have a **secular theme**. There is a predominance of **Shringara rasa**.
* Each principal character introduces itself on the stage with a **'daaru'**, which is a small composition of dance and song, specifically choreographed for the revelation of each character.
* The dance involves all three components of classical dances: Nritta, Natya and Nritya. It is similar to Bharatanatyam but has its own features.
* The performance has the following parts:
  * Sollakath or Patakshara: The Nritta part, where movement of the body is made.
  * Kavutvams: The Nritya part which involves extensive acrobatics. It may also be performed as Nritta.
* The Kuchipudi dance style is a manifestation of the earthly elements in the human body.
* In a Kuchipudi recital, the dancer may combine the role of a singer into themselves as well. Hence, it becomes a dance-drama performance.
* **Both Lasya and Tandava** elements are important in the Kuchipudi dance form.
* Apart from group performances, there are some popular *solo elements* in Kuchipudi as well. Some of them are as follows:
  * **Manduka Shabdam** – Tells the **story of a frog**.
  * **Tarangam** – The dancer performs with their **feet on the edges of a brass plate** and balancing a pot of water on the head or a set of diyas.
 * **Jala Chitra Nrityam** – In this item, the dancer **draws pictures** on the floor with their toes while dancing.
* A Kuchipudi recital is generally accompanied with **Carnatic music**, *violin* and *mridangam* being the principal instruments. The recital is in Telugu language.
* The dress of male performers is called **Bagalbandi** and female performers wear Benarasi.

Famous proponents: Natyakalanidhi Lakshminarayana Sastry (*the father of solo format of Kuchipudi*), Balasaraswathi, Radha Reddy and Raja Reddy, Yamini Krishnamurthy, Indrani Rahman, etc.

Kathakali

In the temples of **Kerala**, two forms of dance-drama, Ramanattam and Krishnattam, evolved under the patronage of feudal lords, narrating episodes from the **Ramayana** and **Mahabharata**. These folk drama traditions later became the source of Kathakali, which derived its name from the words 'Katha' meaning story and 'Kali' meaning drama. It is closely related to Koodiyattam (Sanskrit drama tradition) and other ancient martial arts performance. It is a wonderful combination of music, dance and drama.
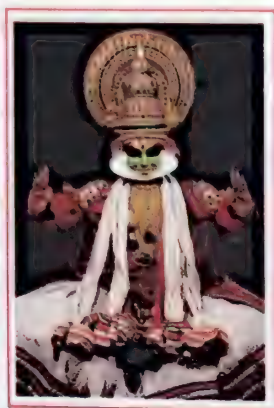
(a)　　　　　(b)

Kathakali

However, with the breakdown of the feudal set-up, Kathakali began declining as an art form. It was revived in the 1930s by the famous Malayali poet **V. N. Menon** under the patronage of **Mukunda Raja**.

Some of the **features** of Kathakali dance are as follows:

❋ Kathakali is generally an all-male troupe performance.

❋ There is minimal use of props in the Kathakali recital. However, very elaborate facial make-up along with a head gear is used for different characters. The make-up or *vesham* is of five types – Pacha, Kathi, Thadi, Kari and Minukku. Different colours have their own significance in the makeup:

    ❖ *Green* indicates nobility, divinity and virtue.

    ❖ *Red* patches beside the nose indicate royalty.

    ❖ *Black* is used to indicate evil and wickedness.

    ❖ *Yellow* is for saints and women.

    ❖ *Completely red painted face* indicates evil.

    ❖ *White beard* indicates beings with higher consciousness and divinity.

❋ It involves both dance and drama, and the two cannot be clearly separated. The performance starts with *Kelikottu* (calling attention of the audience) and *Todayam* (invoking the blessings of the Gods).

❋ Most of the Kathakali recitals are a grand representation of the eternal conflict between good and evil. It draws its themes from the stories narrated in the epics and the puranas. It is also called as the 'Ballad of the East'.

❋ The language used for Kathakali songs is **Manipravalam**, that is a mixture of Malayalam and Sanskrit. It may have evolved from *Ramanattam*. The text of Kathakali songs is called Attakkatha.

❋ **Music** is important to rightfully convey the entire drama to the viewers. Different compositions of music are used during the performance to give depth to the drama.

❋ **Gestures** are perhaps the crown jewel of the entire dance-drama. Kathakali is remarkable in the representation of the rasas through **movements of eye and eyebrows**, through which

the story is conveyed. Nine important facial expressions called '**Navarasas**' are taught to convey the different emotions. Extensive hand gestures are also used. Therefore, this dance form calls for strenuous training. Mudras are used to convey the ideas which are based on *Hastalakshana Deepika*, a treatise on the language of hand gestures.

* Kathakali is generally performed in **open-air theatres** covered with coarse mats or temple premises with lush green trees of Kerala providing a backdrop. A brass lamp is used for lighting.

* The arrival of dawn, accompanied with a continuous sound of drums, **chenda and maddala**, marks the beginning and end of a Kathakali recital.

* Kathakali symbolises the element of **sky** or ether.

Famous proponents: Guru Kunchu Kurup, Gopinath, Kottakal Sivaraman, Rita Ganguly, etc.
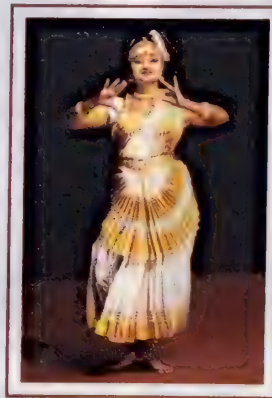
Mohiniyattam

Mohiniyattam or the **Dance of an Enchantress** ('Mohini' meaning beautiful woman and 'attam' means dance) is essentially a **solo dance** performance by women that was further developed by Vadivelu in the 19th century and gained prominence under the rulers of Travancore in the present state of **Kerala**. The patronage of Swathi Thirunal (the Travancore ruler in the 19th century) is notable. After it had fallen to obscurity, the famous Malayali poet **V. N. Menon** revived it along with **Kalyani Amma**.

(a)   (b)

Mohiniyattam

Some of the **features** of Mohiniyattam are as follows:

* Mohiniyattam combines the **grace** and **elegance** of Bharatanatyam with the vigour of Kathakali. There is a marked absence of thumping of footsteps, and the **footwork is gentle**.

* Mohinivattam generally narrates the story of the **feminine** dance of Vishnu.

* It has its own Nritta and Nritya aspects like that of other classical dances.

* The **Lasya** aspect (beauty and grace) of dance is dominant in a Mohinivattam recital. Hence, it is mainly performed by female dancers.

* The dance is accompanied by music and songs. The story is presented in the language called '**Manipravalam**', which is a mix of Sanskrit and Malayam.

* Costume is of special importance in Mohiniattam, with white and off-white being the principal colours of sarees called Kasavu, and presence of gold-coloured brocade designs. There is no elaborate facial make-up. The dancer wears a leather strap with bells (ghungroo) on her ankles.

* The element of air is symbolised through a Mohinivattam performance.
* 'Atavakul or Atavus' is the collection of 40 basic dance movements.
* Musical instruments used are cymbals, veena, drums and flute, among others.

Famous proponents: Sunanda Nair, Kalamandalam Kshemavathy, Madhuri Amma, Jayaprabha Menon, etc.

Odissi

The caves of **Udayagiri-Khandagiri** provide some of the earliest examples of Odissi dance. The dance form derives its name from the 'Odra nritya' mentioned in the *Natya Shastra*. It was primarily practised by the **'maharis'** and patronised by the Jain King Kharavela.

With the advent of Vaishnavism in the region, the Mahari system became defunct. Instead, young boys were recruited and dressed as females to continue the art form. They came to be known as **'Gotipuas'**. Another variant of this art, **'Nartala'**, continued to be practised at the royal courts.
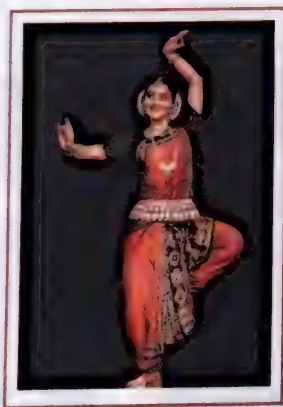
(a)   (b)

Odissi

In the mid-20th century, Odissi gained international acclaim due to the efforts of Charles Fabri and Indrani Rahman. Some of the **features** of Odissi are as follows:

* It is similar to Bharatnatyam in the use of Mudras and postures to express emotions.
* The **tribhanga** posture, that is the three-bended form of the body, is innate to Odissi dance form. Also the 'Chowk' posture with hands spread out depicts masculinity.
* During the dance, the lower body remains largely static, and there is only movement of the torso. Hand gestures play an important role in conveying expressions during the Nritya part.
* Odissi dance form is unique in its representation of gracefulness, sensuality and beauty. The dancers create intricate **geometrical shapes** and patterns with their bodies. Hence, it is known as **'mobile sculpture'**.

Tribhanga Posture

- The **elements** of Odissi dance form include the following:
  - *Mangalacharan* or the beginning where a flower is offered to Mother Earth.
  - *Batu nritya* comprising the dance. It has Tribhanga and Chowk postures.
  - *Pallavi* which includes use of facial expressions and the representation of the song.
  - *Tharijham* consisting of pure dance before the conclusion.
  - The concluding item is of two types. *Moksha* includes joyous movements signifying liberation. *Trikhanda majura* is another way of concluding, in which the performer takes leave from the gods, the audience and the stage.
- Odissi dance is accompanied by Hindustani classical music, and instruments generally used are manjira (cymbals), pakhawaj (drums), sitar, and flute.
- The dance form symbolises the element of **water**.
- The lyrics of Gita Govinda, written by Jayadeva, are used along with compositions of some local poets.
- The woman dancer wears an **elaborate hairstyle, along with silver jewellery and a long necklace**. The dancers wear elaborate belt on their waist and ghungroo on their feet. The female performers wear bright colour Bomkai and Sambalpuri sarees.

Famous proponents: Guru Pankaj Charan Das, Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra, Sonal Mansingh, Sharon Lowen (USA) and Anandini Dasi (Argentina).
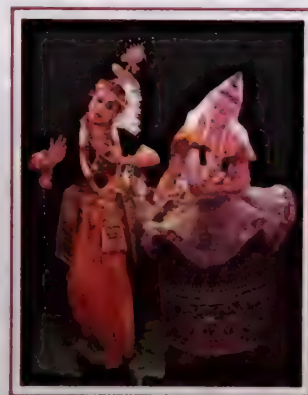
Manipuri

The Manipuri dance form finds its mythological origin in the celestial dance of Shiva and Parvati in the valleys of **Manipur** along with the local 'Gandharvas'. The dance gained prominence with the advent of **Vaishnavism** in the 15th century. Krishna became the central theme of this dance form. It is performed **generally by female dancers**.

In modern times, **Raja Bhag Chandra** of Manipur in the 18th century tried to revive Manipuri dance. **Rabindranath Tagore** brought back the dance form into the limelight when he introduced it in Shantiniketan (West Bengal).

Some of the **features** of Manipuri dance are as follows:

- Manipuri dance is unique in its emphasis on **devotion** and **not sensuality**.
- The faces are covered with a thin veil, and facial expression is of lesser importance. Hand gestures and gentle movement of feet are important.

Manipuri Dance

- While the dance incorporates **both Tandava and Lasya**, emphasis is laid on the **latter**.
- The female dancers wear unique long skirts. The focus is mainly on slow and gracious movements of hand and knee positions.

- **Nagabandha mudra**, in which the body is connected through curves in the shape of '8', is an important posture in the Manipuri dance form.

- **Ras Leela** (Radha-Krishna love story) is a recurring theme of the Manipuri dance recital.

- The drum – **pung** – is an intricate element of the recital. Flute, khartals (wood clapper), dhols and others also accompany the music. Compositions of Jayadeva and Chandidas are used extensively.

- **Thang-ta** and **Sankirtana** are also influenced by Manipuri dance.

Nagabandha Mudra

Famous proponents: The Jhaveri sisters (Nayana, Suverna, Ranjana and Darshana), Guru Bipin Singha and N Madhabi Devi, etc.
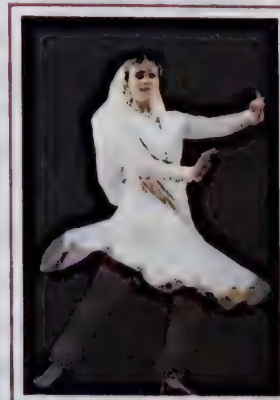
Kathak

Tracing its origins from the Ras Leela of Brajbhoomi, Kathak is the traditional dance form of **Uttar Pradesh**. Kathak derived its name from the 'Kathika' or the storytellers who recited verses from the epics, with gestures and music.

During the Mughal era, the dance form degenerated into a lascivious style and branched off into court dance. It was also influenced by **Persian costumes** and styles of dancing. The classical style of Kathak was revived by **Lady Leela Sokhey** in the 20th century.

Some of the features of Kathak are as follows:

- An important feature of Kathak is the development of **different gharanas** as it is [...] Hindustani style of music:

  - **Lucknow:** Reached its peak under the reign of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah. It puts more importance on *expression* and *grace*.

  - **Jaipur:** Initiated by Bhanuji, it emphasised fluency, speed and long *rhythmic* patterns.

  - **Raigarh:** It developed under the patronage of Raja Chakradhar Singh. It is unique in its emphasis on *percussion* music.

  - **Banaras:** It developed under Janakiprasad. It sees a greater use of floor and lays special emphasis on **symmetry**.

- Kathak dance form is characterised by the use of intricate **footwork** and pirouettes.

(a) (b)
Kathak

* The elements of a Kathak recital are as follows:
  * *Ananda* or the introductory item through which the dancer enters the stage.
  * *Thaat* comprising soft and varied movements.
  * *Todas* and *Tukdas* are small pieces of fast rhythm.
  * **Jugalbandi** is the main attraction of kathak recital which shows a competitive play between the dancer and the tabla player.
  * *Padhant* is a special feature in which the dancer recites complicated bols and demonstrates them.
  * *Tarana* is similar to thillana, which comprises pure rhythmic movements before the end.
  * *Kramalaya* is the concluding piece comprising intricate and fast footwork.
  * **Gat Bhav** is dance **without any music** or chanting. This is used to outline different mythological episodes.
* Kathak is generally accompanied with **dhrupad music**. Taranas, thumris and ghazals were also introduced during the Mughal period.

Famous proponents: Birju Maharaj, Lacchu Maharaj, Sitara Devi, Damayanti Joshi, etc.

Sattriya

Sattriya dance in modern form was introduced by the **Vaishnava Saint Sankardev** in the 15th century AD in Assam. The art form derives its name from the Vaishnava monasteries known as **'Sattras'**, where it was primarily practised. It finds mention in the ancient text 'Natya Shastra' of sage Bharat Muni. It is inspired from the Bhakti movement.

Some of the **features** of Sattriya dance include the following:

* The dance form was an amalgamation of various dance forms prevalent in **Assam**, mainly Ojapali and Devadasi.

(a)

(b)

Sattriya

* The focus of the Sattriya recitals is to own the **devotional** aspect of dance and narrate **mythological stories of Vishnu**.

- Sattriya dance also includes Nritta, Nritya and Natya.
- The dance is generally performed in a **group** by **male monks** known as 'Bhokots' as part of their daily rituals or even on festivals.
- **Khol** (drum), **cymbals** (Manjira) and **flute** form the major accompanying instruments of this dance form. The songs are a composition of Sankardev known as 'Borgeets'.
- There is great emphasis on **rhythmic syllables** and dance postures along with footwork. It combines both Lasya and Tandava elements.
- The Sattriya dance tradition has strictly laid down rules in respect to hand gestures and footwork, and it plays a very important role.
- Costumes worn by male dancers are **Dhoti** and **'Paguri'** (turban), while female dancers wear traditional Assamese jewellery, **'Ghuri'** and **'Chador'**, made in Pat silk. Waist cloth is worn by both men and women.
- In modern times, Sattriya dance has evolved into two separate streams – the Gayan-Bhayanar Nach and the Kharmanar Nach.
- **Ankia Naat:** A type of Sattriya, it involves play or musical-drama. It was originally written in a mix of the Assamese and Maithili language called *Brajavali*. Another similar form is **'Bhaona'**, which is based on stories of Lord Krishna.

Please Note: *To date, the Sangeet Natak Akademi has recognised eight classical dance forms, whereas the* ***Ministry of Culture has recognised nine classical dance forms, including Chhau.***

Gaudiya Nritya (West Bengal)

Gaudiya Nritya is a **Bengali classical dance** whose name traces its origin to Gaur, the capital city of Bengal once upon a time. It is believed that this dance has its roots in *Natya Shastra*. During the Bhakti movement, it is said that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu revived Gaudiya Nritya. The sculptures of this dance form have also been noted on the walls of many temples of Bengal. Later, the dance form was reconstructed by **Mahua Mukherjee**. However, this dance has not yet been recognised by the Sangeet Natak Akademi as a classical dance form.
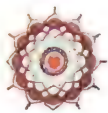
Folk Dances of India

The multitude of folklore, legends and myth prevalent in various parts of India, combined with local song and dance traditions, results in a rich mix of composite art. The folk dance forms are generally spontaneous, crude and performed by the masses without any formal training.

This simplicity gives the art form an inherent beauty. However, these art forms have remained **confined to a certain sect of people** or at a **particular locality**, to whom the knowledge has been passed down through the ages. Some of the well-known folk dances of India are the following:

Kolattam *(Andhra Pradesh)*

Kolannalu or kolattam is a **'stick dance'**. It is generally performed during **village festivals** in rural areas of Andhra Pradesh. It combines rhythmic movements, songs and music. It is performed usually by a large group ranging from 8 to 40. The stick provides the main rhythm during this performance.

Kolattam Dance

Butta Bommalu *(Andhra Pradesh)*

Butta Bommalu literally means basket toys and is a popular dance form of the West Godavari district of **Andhra Pradesh**. The dancers wear **masks** of different characters, resembling toy-like shapes, and entertain through delicate movements and **non-verbal music**.

Lambadi *(Andhra Pradesh)*

This is a folk dance of the **Banjara tribe** mainly in Andhra Pradesh and Telengana. This is based on the daily life of farmers, representing acts like sowing and planting. Women present these events with hand gestures.

Lambadi Dance

Bagurumba *(Assam)*

Bagurumba is a folk dance performed by the **Bodo** tribe of **Assam** and is related to **nature** and the **environment**. Musical instruments that accompany Bagurumba performance are sifung, kham and serja, among others.

Bihu *(Assam)*

Bihu is the popular dance form of **Assam**, performed in a group by **both** men and women. The dancers are dressed in colourful traditional clothing to celebrate the pomp and gaiety. The dance performance includes group formations, rapid hand movements and brisk footsteps.

Bihu Dance

Biraha (Bihar)

Biraha dance along with its variant, Bidesia, is a popular form of entertainment in rural **Bihar**. It is a portrayal of the **pain of women**, whose partners are away from home. However, this dance form is practised **solely by males**, who play the role of female characters as well.

Jat-Jatin (Bihar)

Jat-Jatin is popular in the northern parts of **Bihar**, especially in the regions of Mithila. This dance form is unique in its representation of the **tender love** and **quarrel of a married couple**.

Gaur Muria (Bison horn) (Chhattisgarh)

Gaur Muria is an important ritualistic dance form of the **Muria tribes** who live in the Bastar region of **Chhattisgarh**. The dance imitates the *movements of a bison* and is performed in a group by *both* men and women.

Raut Nacha (Chhattisgarh)

It is performed in **Chhattisgarh** by the Yadav community, especially during the festival of Diwali.

Tarangamel (Goa)

It is the folk dance of **Goa** that celebrates the youthfulness of the region. It is performed during **Dussehra** and **Holi**. The use of **rainbow-like costumes** with multi-coloured flags and streamers makes it a visual spectacle.

Rathwa ni Gher (Gujarat)

Rathwa ni Gher is a tribal dance of the **Rathwa tribal community** of Gujarat. The performance is presented **during Holi** also known as Kavant Festival. Intricate make-up, synchronised footsteps, vigorous whirling of the dancers and the mesmerising symphony created through indigenous musical instruments demonstrate the antique and refined nature of the dance form.

Rathwa ni Gher

Tippani (Gujarat)

Originating from Saurashtra region of **Gujarat**, it is performed exclusively **by women** who *beat the floors* with tippani (*two long wooden sticks joined by square, wooden or iron block*) to the beats of a folk song.

Garba *(Gujarat)*

Garba is a popular folk dance of **Gujarat**, held during *Navratri*. Garba actually refers to 'Garbha deep' – an **earthen pot with holes**, in which a lamp is lit and women dance around it in *circular movements* with *rhythmic clapping*. India has nominated Garba dance for UNESCO intangible cultural heritage in 2023.

Garba Dance

Dandiya Raas *(Gujarat)*

Raas or **Dandiya Raas** is the traditional folk dance form in **Gujarat** and is associated with scenes of Holi and *lila* of Krishna and Radha at Vrindavan. Along with Garba, it is the featured dance of Navratri evenings in western India.

There are several forms of Raas, but 'Dandiya Raas', performed during Navaratri in Gujarat, is the most popular form. In Dandiya Raas, men and women dance in two circles, with sticks in their hands. 'Garba' is also a form of Raas, namely 'Raas Garba'.

Dandiya Raas

Charba *(Himachal Pradesh)*

It is the popular folk dance of **Himachal Pradesh**, performed during the **Dussehra** festivities.

Phag *(Himachal Pradesh)*

Phag or Faag is the farmer's folk dance of **Himachal Pradesh**. Phag dance is celebrated primarily in the months of February and March. These months fall in Falgun month in the Hindu calendar (time of harvesting). Women wear ghagra-choli with dupatta and men wear colourful pagdi (turban).

Alkap *(Jharkhand and West Bengal)*

Alkap is a rural dance-drama performance prevalent in the Rajmahal Hills of **Jharkhand** and Murshidabad and Malda regions of **West Bengal**. It is performed by troops of 10–12 dancers, accompanied by one or two lead singers known as *gayens*. The troops perform popular folklore and mythological stories, in which the dance is interspersed with comical sketches known as *kap*. The dance is generally associated with the **Gajan festival** of **Shiva**.

Jhumair *(West Bengal, Jharkhand and Odisha)*

Jhumair is a popular **harvest dance**, performed by the tribal people of West Bengal, Jharkhand and Odisha and even in the tea gardens of Assam. It has two variations – Janani Jhumair,

performed by women, and Mardana Jhumair, performed by men. It is a major attraction at many fairs and festivals. A similar dance form has been noted in the paintings of the Bhimbetka rock shelters.

Dumhal *(Jammu and Kashmir)*

It is performed in **Jammu and Kashmir by the Watal tribe**. It involves colourful costumes with a tall conical hat for men. Performers dance and sing to the drum beats.

Dumhal

Cheraw *(Mizoram)*

It is a folk dance of **Mizoram** and is performed using bamboo sticks. It is likely to have a foreign origin. Men tap long pairs of bamboo in rhythmic beats, and girls dance to the beats of the bamboo.

Hulivesha *(Karnataka)*

Performed in coastal **Karnataka**, Hulivesha involves male dancers **painted like tigers** who dance and portray an angry tiger to honour **Goddess Durga** whose favourite animal is tiger. It is generally performed during the **Navaratri** festival.

Source:

Pata Kunitha *(Karnataka)*

It is a popular dance form in the **Mysore** region. It is primarily a religious dance performed by **men** who use **long bamboo poles** decorated with colourful ribbons, known as *pata*. The colourful exuberance makes it a visual spectacle and is extremely popular among the masses of **all religions**. *Puja Kunitha* is a variant of this dance form popular in the region around Bengaluru and Mandya districts.

Hulivesha

Nagaradhane *(Tulu Nadu Region, i.e., Southern Karnataka and Northern Kerala)*

It is a form of **cobra worship** practised by the **Tuluva community** members in the Tulu Nadu region. During the worship, there are two distinct rituals performed – Aashleshabali and Nagamandala. Among the two, the Nagamandala is longer and more colourful and depicts the divine union of male and female snakes.

Buta Kola *(Tulu Nadu Region, i.e., Southern Karnataka and Northern Kerala)*

The Buta Kola dance is highly stylised and held in **honour of the local deities** worshipped by the **Tulu people**. It involves music, dance, recital and elaborate costumes.

Buta Kola

Aati Kalenja *(Tulu Nadu Region, i.e., Southern Karnataka and Northern Kerala)*

It is an ancient folk art form practised by the **Tulu people** (mainly by the Nalike community) which is believed to bring prosperity during **Aati** (one of the months in the Tulu calendar). It is believed that during the month of Aati (July–August), nature's spirit Kalenja descends on Earth to bless the land and its people. People believe that this festival brings the positive energy which would **ward off evil spirits and diseases**. Kalenja wears special attire of coconut and palm leaves and **visits homes of people blessing them**. He holds an umbrella made from palm leaves and bamboo sticks. It sparks hope in people.

Kaikottikali *(Kerala)*

Kaikottikali is a popular temple dance of **Kerala**. It is performed by **both** men and women at the time of **Onam** to celebrate the rich harvest. *Airukali* and *Tattamakali* are similar forms of this dance.

Padayani *(Kerala)*

Padayani is a **martial dance** performed in the Bhagavati temples of southern **Kerala**. Padayani literally means rows of infantry, and it is a very rich and colourful affair. The dancers wear **huge masks** known as kolams, and present interpretations of divine and semi-divine narratives. Some of the popular characters are *Bhairavi*, *Kalan* (God of death), *Yakshi* and *Pakshi*.

It is performed to worship **Goddess Kali**.

Padayani

Chakyar Koothu *(Kerala)*

It is an art form of **Kerala**. It is a solo performance, where the performer dresses himself as a **snake**. It is combination of prose and poetry, and is generally a narration in Malayalam. It has been traditionally performed by the Chakyar community (a priestly caste). The performer wears a colourful **headgear**, a large black **moustache** and red spots all over his body.

Kolkali-Parichakali *(Kerala and Lakshadweep)*

It is a popular martial dance in the areas of southern **Kerala** and **Lakshadweep**. *Kol* means stick and *Paricha* means shield. The dancers use **mock weapons** made of wood and enact **fight sequences**. The performance **starts at a slow pace**, but slowly builds up the tempo and reaches climax in a frenzy.

Fugdi *(Konkan region)*

It is performed in the **Konkan region of Maharashtra and Goa** during festivals by women. They dance in varied formations, mostly in circles or rows. It has many sub-types as per local customs.

Rai Nritya *(Madhya Pradesh)*

Rai Nritya originated from the **Bundelkhand** region of Madhya Pradesh. This folk dance is mainly performed by the **Bedia tribe**. It is a **peacock dance** of the women.

Jawara *(Madhya Pradesh)*

Jawara is the **harvest dance** popular in the Bundelkhand region of **Madhya Pradesh**. The dance, which includes *balancing a basket full of jawar* on the head, is accompanied by heavy **instrumental music**.

Jaw
Source: www.bh

Matki *(Madhya Pradesh)*

Matki is performed by the **women** of the **Malwa region** on the occasions of **weddings** and other **festivities**. It is mainly performed **solo**, while balancing a number of **earthen pots** on their head. *Aada* and *Khada Nach* are popular variants of the Matki dance.

Lavani *(Maharashtra)*

Lavani is a popular folk dance of **Maharashtra**. The name **'Lavani'** has been derived from the word **'Lavanya'**, which means beauty. The dance had attained popularity in the Peshwa era in the 18th century. Dancers need to dance with the rapid beating of the dholki as they perform. The costume that female dancers wear is called **Nauvari** because it is nine yards long. Women dancers also wear heavy jewellery such as bangles, kamar-band (cummerbund), anklets, earrings, etc.

Thang-Ta *(Manipur)*

Thang-ta is the exclusive **martial dance** form of **Manipur**. *Thang* means sword and *Ta* means spear. The dance performance is a unique display of skill, creativity and agility in which the performers enact a mock fight sequence – leaping to **attack and defend**.

Rangma *(Nagaland)*

The Rangma is the **war dance** of the **Nagas**. Dressed in colourful costumes, jewellery and colourful headgears, the dancers enact mock war formations and traditions.

Paika *(Odisha)*

Paika is a martial folk dance performed in Jharkhand and in southern parts of **Odisha**. Paika is a form of **long spear**. The dancers are armed with wooden spears and shields, and show off their skills and agility in infantry-like formations. It has a martial arts character. The word **Paika** signifies battle.

Ghanta Mrudangam *(Odisha)*

The Ghanta Mrudangam is a **tribal** folk dance of the **Vaishnava community** mainly in the Ganjam district of Odisha. It is related to the worship of Radha, Krishna and Lord Jagannath.

Cheraw

Danda Jatra *(Odisha)*

The Danda Naata or the Danda Jatra is one of the oldest folk arts of India. Mainly popular in **Odisha**, it is a unique blend of dance, drama and music. While it mainly narrates stories and lore about **Shiva**, the theme is generally **social harmony** and **brotherhood**.

Dalkhai *(Odisha)*

It is usually performed during the festival of **Dussehra** in **Odisha**. It is performed by the tribes, and many musical instruments are used. Events from the Ramayana and Mahabharata, stories of Lord Krishna, among others are represented. At the beginning and end of every stanza, a word signifying **girlfriend** is used.

Garadi *(Puducherry)*

It is a famous folk dance of **Puducherry**, and is performed to celebrate the **victory of Lord Rama**

over Ravana. The dancers distinguished as *'Vanaras'* (monkeys) celebrate this victory. Dancers wear 10 *'Anjalis'* (iron rings) on each of their legs.

Bhangra/Giddha *(Punjab)*

Bhangra is the highly energetic folk dance of **Punjab**. Accompanied by infectious and catchy drum beats, it is a popular form of celebration during festivities. **Giddha** is the *female counterpart* of the male Bhangra.

Bhangra Dance

Jhoomar *(Punjab)*

It is performed by the **tribal Sikhs in Punjab** and adjoining areas during the harvest season. It is performed in a circle. **The movement of the arms** to the tune of the drums is its main forte. Costumes are the same as in Bhangra. It was carried to India by the traders from Baluchistan.

Ghoomar or Gangore *(Rajasthan)*

It is a traditional folk dance performed by the **women** of the **Bhil tribe** in **Rajasthan**. It is characterised by the pirouetting movements of the women, which brings into prominence the multi-coloured vibrancies of the flowing *Ghaghra*.

Kalbelia *(Rajasthan)*

It is a sensuous folk dance performed by the women of the **Kalbelia community** of **Rajasthan**. The costumes and dance movements are similar to that of the **serpents**. **'Been'** (wind instrument played by snake charmers) is the popular musical instrument of this dance form. UNESCO has inscribed Kalbelia folk songs and dances in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010.

Kalbelia Dance

Tera Tali *(Rajasthan)*

It is performed by the *Kamar* tribe of **Rajasthan**. Women sit on the ground while performing Tera Tali, and **cymbals (Manjiras) are tied** to different parts of the body of the performer, which is quite unique.

Tera Tali

Singhi Chham *(Sikkim)*

The Singhi Chham is a popular mask dance of **Sikkim**. The dancers are dressed in furry lion costumes symbolising the **snow lion** and pay tribute to *Khang-Chen Dzong Pa* (Kanchenjunga Peak).
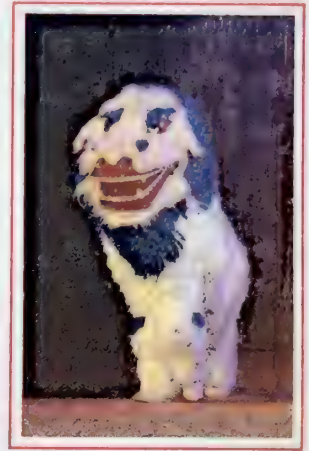
Singhi Chham

Kummi *(Tamil Nadu and Kerala)*

Kummi is a popular folk dance in the region of **Tamil Nadu** and **Kerala**. The dance is performed usually by Tamil **women**, standing in a circular formation. A unique feature of the dance performance is the **absence of any accompanying music**. The beats are generated by *rhythmic clapping*. The dance is generally performed during **Pongal** and other religious festivities. Kolattam and Pinnal Kolattam are close variants of this dance form.

Mayilattam *(Tamil Nadu and Kerala)*

Mayilattam is a folk dance of **Kerala and Tamil Nadu** where **young girls** are **dressed as peacocks**, with colourful headgears, beaks and feathers. It is also known as **peacock dance**. Similar dances include *Kaalai Attam* (bull dance), *Karadi Attam* (bear dance), *Aali Attam* (demon dance) and *Paampu Attam* (snake dance).

Mayilattam

Perini *(Telangana)*

Perini Sivatandavam is an **ancient dance form from Telangana**. It is performed in the **honour of Lord Shiva**. This dance is depicted as the sculptures near **Garbha Gudi (Sanctum Sanctorum) of the Ramappa Temple at Warangal**. It is called **'Dance of Warriors' performed by the warriors**. It reached its pinnacle during the **rule of the 'Kakatiya' dynasty**.

Hojagiri *(Tripura)*

A famous folk dance of **Tripura**, Hojagiri involves movement of **only the lower half** of the body by a group of four to six women or young girls. It is performed during Lakshmi Puja. The female dancers **balance** earthen pitchers as well as other props while dancing.

Hojagiri Dance

Garia *(Tripura)*

Garia festival marks the **commencement of the sowing season** by the **Tripuri tribal community**. It is commemorated through the Garia dance that accompanies prayers and pujas for a bountiful harvest and is held in April.

Lebang Boomani *(Tripura)*

It is a harvest dance of Tripura. It is one of two dances associated with the **Tripuris** (tribal community). Following Garia, the Tripuris wait for the monsoon season. During this time, a large number of **colourful insects called *lebangs*** descend on the hill slopes in search of the sown seeds. The dancers depict how bamboo clappers are used to catch them. The Tripuris believe that the number of lebangs caught indicate how good the harvest will be.

Meladom *(Tripura)*

It is believed that this **post-harvest dance** originated from the process of **weaving**. During this time, cotton is collected to start weaving. The people of **Keipeng community** participate in this dance.

Mosak Sumani *(Tripura)*

This is a beautiful dance form among the **tribes** of Tripura and is related to **hunting of wild animals**. The hunting sequences are shown in great style through gestures and postures in rhythmic steps.

Dadra *(Uttar Pradesh)*

It is the semi-classical form of a dance popular in **Uttar Pradesh**, accompanied by the music of the same style. It was extremely popular among the *courtesans* of the Lucknow region.

Chhau *(West Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand)*

The word 'Chhau' originated from the Hindi word 'Chhaya', meaning shadow. It is a form of mask dance that uses vigorous martial movements to narrate mythological stories. Some narrations also use natural themes such as *Sarpa Nritya* (serpent dance) or *Mayura Nritya* (peacock dance).

There are **three main styles** of Chhau dance – **Saraikela Chhau** in Jharkhand, **Mayurbhanj Chhau** in Odisha and **Purulia Chhau** in West Bengal. Of these, Mayurbhanj Chhau artists do not wear masks. In 2010, **UNESCO** inscribed Chhau in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Chhau Dance

Gambhira *(West Bengal)*

The Gambhira is performed in the Malda district of West Bengal during the festival of Chaitra Sankranti. The masks used in this form of dance are made out of neem and fig trees. The songs of Gambhira originated from the Hindu mythology, especially from shakti and shaiva worship.

Karma Naach

It is performed during the **tribal festival of 'Karma'** by many tribes of Eastern India, especially in the **Chota Nagpur Plateau**. Dancers form a circle and dance with their arms around each other's waist.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- **Natya** – amalgamation of dance, drama and music – *Pathya* (from the Rig Veda) – *Abhinaya* (from the Yajur Veda) – *Geet* (from the Sama Veda) – *Rasa* (from the Atharva Veda).
- **Shiva's** *Tandava* – signifies the cycle of creation, preservation and destruction – to the feminine response of Parvati.
- **Natyashastra** – compiled between 200 BC and 200 AD – by Bharata Muni – dance as the 'complete art' encompassing within its scope all other forms of art – music, sculpture, poetry and drama.
- **Bharatanatyam** – classical dance form – Tamil Nadu – solo dance performance of the temple dancers or 'devadasis' – now popular among male and group artists as well.
- **Kuchipudi** – group of actors going from village to village – village of Kusselavapuri or Kuchelapuram in Andhra Pradesh – theme is based on the *Bhagavata Purana* – performed at temples – predominance of Shringara rasa.
- **Kathakali** – two forms of dance-drama, Ramanattam and Krishnattam – 'Katha' meaning story and 'Kali' meaning drama – use of Manipravalam language – from Kerala.
- **Mohiniyattam** – dance of an enchantress – from Kerala – Lasya aspect of dance is dominant – element of air is symbolised.
- **Odissi** – originated in Odisha – tribhanga and chowk posture – represents gracefulness, sensuality and beauty – symbolises the element of water.
- **Manipuri** – originated in Manipur – emphasis on devotion and not sensuality – Nagabandha mudra.
- **Kathak** – traditional dance from Uttar Pradesh – influenced by Persian costumes – key elements are *Ananda*, Thaat, Jugalbandi, *Padhant, Tarana, Kramalaya,* Gat Bhav, *Todas* and *Tukda* – use of intricate footwork and pirouettes.
- **Sattriya** – introduced by the Vaishnava Saint Sankaradeva – prevalent in Assam – major instruments are khol (drum), cymbals (manjira) and flute.
- **Sangeet Natak Akademi** – has recognised eight classical dance forms, whereas the Ministry of Culture has recognised nine classical dance forms including Chhau.
- **Chhau** – form of mask dance – use of vigorous martial movements – prevalent in Eastern India (Saraikela Chhau in Jharkhand, Mayurbhanj Chhau in Odisha and Purulia Chhau in West Bengal) – UNESCO inscribed Chhau in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

CHAPTER 11

INDIAN THEATRE

🪷 Introduction

It has been postulated that the excavated ruins at **Sitabena and Jogimara Caves** represent the world's oldest amphitheatres. This is just one of the instances that highlight the long tradition of theatre in the Indian cultural scenario. In **Bharat Muni's *Natya Shastra***, Lord Brahma created the *Natya Veda* for the pastime of the Gods, combining elements of the four Vedas. *Natya Shastra* itself was written in the period between 200 BC and 200 AD and is the first formal treatise on dramaturgy. In it, **ten types of play** – from a one-act play to 10 acts – have been described and cover all aspects of classical Sanskrit literature.
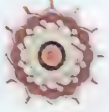
Classical Sanskrit Theatre

Theatre in India began as a narrative art form, which encompassed a concoction of music, dance and acting. Recitation, dance and music were integral parts of theatre. The Sanskrit word 'nataka' was derived from the root word 'nata' which actually meant a dancer. **Rupaka, Drishyakavya and Preksakavya** were other words used to describe drama. In ancient India, plays were generally of two types:

* **Lokadharmi:** These were realistic depictions of daily life.
* **Natyadharmi:** These were conventional plays with a more stylised narration and overt symbolism.

Sariputraprakarana by **Ashvaghosha**, an eminent philosopher, is considered the first example of classical Sanskrit drama. It was a nine-act play.

Another important playwright of the time was **Bhasa**, who composed 13 plays probably in the period between 3rd and 4th century AD.

Sudraka was the first to introduce the essence of conflict in his play *Mricchakatika*. Apart from a hero and a heroine, this play features an antagonist for the first time.

Kalidasa is perhaps the most popular among the Sanskrit playwrights. His three works – *Mālavikāgnimitram, Vikramorvashi* and *Shakuntalam* – are some of the finest examples of classical Sanskrit drama. Kalidasa was unparalleled in his portrayal of the eternal **conflict between desire and duty**.

Some of the other examples of plays include *Uttaramacharita* and *Mahaviracha* **Bhavabhuti**, *Mudrarakshasa* by **Visakhadatta** and *Ratnavali* by **Harshavardhana**.

In the classical Sanskrit tradition, plays were categorised into **10 types** – namely *Anka, Bhana, Dima, Ihamgra, Nataka, Prahasana, Prakarana, Svakarna, Vithi* and *Vyayog. Natya Shastra* describes only two of these – *Nataka* and *Prakarna*. Classical Sanskrit plays were bound by a few rigid **conventions**:

* They were generally four- to seven-act plays.
* They always had **happy endings** (unlike the Greek tragedies), where the hero wins or does not die. Portrayal of tragedy was almost rare.
* The **protagonist was male** who would always achieve the object of his desire at the end.
* The plays had a **well-defined** opening, progression, development, pause and conclusion.

Sanskrit Plays

Sanskrit plays followed an almost **ritualistic progression** as described below:

* The play started with a number of **pre-play rituals**, also known as *purva-raga*, most of which were performed behind the curtain.

* Following this, the *Sutradhar*, who was the stage manager and director, entered the stage with his assistants. Dressed in white, he would offer **prayer to the deity** and seek his blessings.
* After that, the leading lady was summoned and the time and place of the play was announced by the *Sutradhar*. He also gave a brief introduction of the playwright.
* The theatre, as per Bharata, could accommodate around **400 persons**.
* The stages were **two-storeyed**. While the upper floor was used for representing celestial sphere, the lower one represented the terrestrial sphere.
* **Curtains were used** to intensify the impact of the play. However, **masks were not used**.

Characters in Sanskrit plays were important. They were broadly classified into three kinds which are Nayaka (hero or the protagonist), Nayika (heroine) and the Vidusaka (clown).

* **Nayaka** (hero), played by males, may be of different personalities like Lalita (kind-hearted), Shanta (calm and composed), Uddhata (agitated or arrogant), etc. Hero may also be 'Pratinayaka' (antagonist) such as Ravana, Duryodhana, etc.
* **Nayika** (heroine), played by females, are queens, friends, courtesans (Ganika) and divine lady (Divya).
* **Vidusaka** (clown), the **comic character**, plays a vital role in the plays. He is the noble and good-hearted, often a friend of the hero. He questions the prevailing social norms through satire. Traditionally, he spoke in Prakrit while others spoke in Sanskrit.

Thus, the Sanskrit play became an amalgamation of entertainment and religious traditions.

List of Prominent Ancient Sanskrit Plays

Author	Drama/Play	Timeline
Bhasa	Swapnavasavadatta (Vasavadatta in dream) is one of the best dramas written by him. Many of his plays are based on themes from the two great epics. The plays based on the Ramayana are Pratima and Abhisheka, while Madhyamavyayoga, Dutaghatotkacha, Karnabhara and Urubhanga (story of Duryodhana during and after his fight with Bhima) are based on the Mahabharata. Pancharatra and Charudatta are some other works.	Due to non-conformity with the rules of Bharata's Natyashastra, it is believed that Bhasa belonged to within the 3rd or 4th century BC.
Kalidasa (His three major plays)	Mālavikāgnimitram (The love story of Malavika a maiden of the Queen and Agnimitra, the son of Pushyamitra Shunga) Vikramōrvaśīyam (Love story of Vikram and Urvasi) Abhigyana Shakuntalam (The recognition of Shakuntala as mentioned in the Mahabharata)	Kalidasa (4th–5th century AD) flourished during the reign of Chandragupta II, but his best works were probably written during the reign of Kumaragupta I.
Sudraka	Mricchakatika (The Little Clay Cart) Is a story of a love affair of a young Brahmin Charudatta and a wealthy courtesan	It was probably written after Bhasa's Charudatta (3rd century AD). Kalidasa has not mentioned anything about Sudraka, but it has been mentioned in Kalhana's *Rajatarangini.*

| Author	Drama/Play	Timeline
Vishakhadatta	**Mudrarakshasa** (a political drama and narrates the ascent of King Chandragupta Maurya to power in India) **Devi Chandraguptam** (political drama which relates to the story of a Gupta King Ramagupta, who decides to surrender his wife Dhruvadevi to a Shaka enemy but then his younger brother Chandragupta enters the camp and kills the enemy and it is believed that he finally married Dhruvadevi after dethroning Ramagupta)	Though the period is not certain, it could be dated in or after the 6th century AD. According to some sources, Vishakhadatta was a contemporary of Chandragupta II, and lived in the late 4th century to early 5th century.
Harshavardhana (wrote three plays)	*Ratnavali* (The love story of princess Ratnavali, daughter of the King of Ceylon and King Udayana. The mention of celebration of Holi for the first time can be found here.) *Nagananda* (Story of how Prince Jimutavahana gives up his own body to stop a sacrifice of serpents to the divine Garuda. One unique characteristic in this drama is the invocation to Lord Buddha in the Nandi verse) *Priyadarsika* (union of Udayana and Priyadarsika, daughter of King Dridhavarman)	Harshavardhana ruled north India from 606 AD to 647 AD with Kannauj as his capital.
Bhavabhuti	**Uttara Ramacharitam** (The later life of Rama). It was written in 700 AD. **Mahaviracharita** and **Malatimadhava** are other two dramas ascribed to him.	He has been mentioned by Kalhana as a poet in the court of King Yasovarman of Kanyakubja.

Reasons for Decline of Sanskrit Theatre

The reasons for the decline of Sanskrit theatre include the following:

* As Sanskrit dramatists began to **diverge towards poetry**, and the lyrical writings started gaining popularity over the dramatic works.
* The rigid orthodoxy of the Sanskrit theatre **restricted the creative space** of new playwrights who turned to other forms.
* As Sanskrit became more and more embellished, it lost popularity among the masses. It was increasingly confined to the **religious sphere** and among the Brahmins, while other languages such as Pali and Prakrit took its place.
* With the **advent of Muslim rulers**, Sanskrit theatre took a definite backseat, as dance and music gained patronage.

Koothiyattam (Koodiyattam) *is India's* **oldest** *continuing form of theatre and living tradition that has survived since* **10th century AD** *in* **Kerala**. *It completely adheres to the rules laid down in Natya Shastra and is the traditional privilege of the Chakyar and Nambiar castes of Kerala.*

The play is performed in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Malayalam, with musical instruments Mizhavu and Edakka providing the background music. All the characters begin the play with Nirvahana, a recollection of the past events of the story. After this, the story unfolds in a leisurely fashion with commentaries on social, philosophical and political behaviour.

Margi Madhu Chakyar is a leading exponent of this art form.
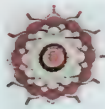
Folk Theatre

India boasts of a rich tradition of folk theatre in various parts of India. The traditional folk theatre reflects the various aspects of the local lifestyle including social norms, beliefs and customs. While the Sanskrit theatre was more urban-oriented and sophisticated in its treatment of the play, folk theatre had rural roots and the rustic flavour was reflected in the dramatic style involved. The First Five-Year Plan recommended that the traditional communication meda like folk theaters may be used to create social awareness among the masses in rural India regarding women empowerment, eradication of untouchability etc.
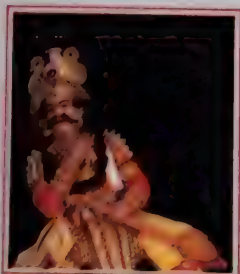
Most of the folk theatres that still exist emerged in the period around 15th–16th century AD with devotional themes. However, with time it started adopting love ballads and accounts of local heroes and thus adopted more secular tones. In the post-independence period, folk theatre became a popular method of dissemination of social wisdom than mere social entertainment.

To better understand folk theatres across India, let us discuss them one by one:

Ritual Theatre	Theatre of Entertainment	South Indian Theatre
Ankia Naat	Bhavai	Yakshagana
Ramlila	Daskathia	Burra Katha
Raslila	Garoda	Pagati Veshaalu
Bhuta	Jatra	Bayalata
Ramman	Kariyala	Tal-Maddale
	Maach	Theyyam
	Nautanki	Krishna Attam
	Oja-Pali	Kuruvanji
	Pandavani	
	Powada	
	Swang	
	Tamasha	
	Villu Pattu	
	Bhand Pather	
	Bhaona	
	Dashavatar	
	Bhand	

Classification of Indian Folk Theatre

Folk Theatre	State	Theme
Ankia Naat	Assam	It is a traditional **one-act play** started by the famous Vaishnava Saint **Sankardev** and his disciple Madhavdev in the 15th–16th century AD. It is performed in the style of an opera and depicts incidents from the life of **Lord Krishna**. The *Sutradhar* or narrator is accompanied by a group of musicians known as *Gayan-Bayan Mandali* who play the 'khol' and cymbals. One of the unique features of this form of theatre is the **use of masks** to depict special expressions. Plays are written in Assamese-Maithili mixed language called **Brajavali**.
Ojhapali	Assam	Ojhapali is a unique narrative theatre form primarily associated with the festival of Manasha or the **Serpent Goddess**. The narration is a prolonged affair, with three distinct parts – Baniya Khanda, Bhatiyali Khanda and Deva Khanda. Ojha is the **main narrator** and Palis are the members of the chorus.
Bhaona	Assam	The idea is to spread religious and moral messages to people through entertainment and drama. It is a presentation of Ankia Naat and the use of **Vaishnavite themes** are common. The Sutradhar (narrator) narrates the play and sings verses from holy texts. Songs and music are also a part of it. This folk theatre was introduced by **Sankardeva** in the early 16th century.
Ramlila	Uttar Pradesh	It is an enactment of the Ramayana using songs, dances and dialogues, mainly during the period before Dussehra. It is generally performed by **male actors**, who perform the role of Sita as well.
Naqal or Bhand	Uttar Pradesh/ Punjab	It is mimicry-based performance, from Punjab (Naqal) and Uttar Pradesh (Bhand). The performing artist is often called 'behrupiya' or 'naqalchi' (impersonator). He uses comedy, absurdities, wit and humour to get across the social or political message. It is performed by artists from **Muslim Bhand Community**.
Nautanki	North India	An **offshoot of Swang**, Nautanki is one of the most popular forms of theatre in **north India**, which finds mention in Abul Fazl's **Ain-i-Akbari**. The plays are themed around historical, social and folk tales and delivered through dance and music. Dialogues are delivered in a lyrical fashion, accompanied by the beats of a drum called **Nagada**. In the later period, two schools of Nautanki seated around Kanpur and Lucknow gained importance.
Raslila	Gujarat	Raslila is a dance drama enactment of the adolescent love stories of Krishna and Radha.
Garoda	Gujarat	This is a popular art form of the 'Garoda' Brahmin community of **Gujarat**. It uses **painted pictures** to narrate stories of romance and valour.
Bhuta Aradhana or Bhuta Kola	Karnataka	Bhuta, which means spirit, is a traditional practise of worshipping divine beings (ancestors, different avatars of Hindu Gods, local folklore heroes, etc) mainly by the **Tulu speaking population**, and is prevalent in coastal Karnataka. **Kola** is the chief form of Bhuta worship and it is a ritualistic theatre, influenced by Yakshagana form.
Yakshagana	Karnataka	It is perhaps one of the oldest theatre traditions, which is prevalent till date in Karnataka and parts of Kerala. It originated in the royal courts of the **Vijayanagara empire** and was performed by a particular community known as **Jakkula Varu**. Originally, it was largely a descriptive **dance-drama** enacted by a **single artist**. Later forms adopted further variations and became a typical dance drama. It is strongly influenced by the **Vaishnava Bhakti Movement**.

Folk Theatre	State	Theme
Chavittu Natakam	Kerala	It is an old **maritime** theatre form of coastal Kerala. It is a colourful **Christian** art form and has elements borrowed from both European and Kerala art forms. Its origin can be traced with the advent of the Portuguese to this region. The themes are stories from the Bible and heroic exploits of legendary Christian warriors.
Bayalata	Karnataka	It is an **open-air theatre** tradition of **Karnataka** that is performed during the worship of the **local deity**. The stories are also based on the **love of Radha-Krishna**. It is a form of Yakshagana.
Tal-Maddale	Karnataka/Kerala	Tal is a kind of Cymbal and Maddale is a kind of drum. It is generally considered as the **predecessor of Yakshagana**. The play is **performed while being seated** and **without any costumes, dance** or **acting**. The narration is carried out by a Bhagavata who is aided by a group of *Arthadharis*. It is mainly performed in coastal **Karnataka** and **Kerala**.
Villu Paatu/Villadi Champaatu	Kerala/Tamil Nadu	The term 'Villu Paatu' means **bow-song**. It is a form of musical theatre popular in **Kerala** and some parts of **Tamil Nadu**, in which stories of the **Ramayana** are narrated using **bow-shaped instruments**.
Theyyam	Kerala/Karnataka	Theyyam is performed in **Kerala**. It is similar to a practice in **Karnataka**, called **Bhuta Kola**. It is an open theatre and is performed in front of the local temples to mainly honour the spirit of the ancestors besides gods. Themes of Vaishnavism, Shaktism and Shaivism are now common. The actors wear elaborate headgear and colourful costumes.
Krishnanattam	Kerala	It is a **colourful dance-drama** tradition of **Kerala** that originated in the mid-17th century. Based on the works of *Krishna Geethi*, it is a carnival that lasts for **eight days**, with performances in eight consecutive nights at temples narrating the life story of **Lord Krishna**.
Kuruvanji	Tamil Nadu	Originated around 300 years ago, Kuruvanji is characterised by classical Tamil poetry and songs. The first Kuruvanji was composed by Tirikooda Rasappa Kavirayar. The basic theme revolves around a **love-struck heroine**. Kuruvanji literally means 'fortune-teller' who predicts the **fate of the heroine**. It is performed in a **dance ballet form** with Bharatanatyam being the principal dance form in **Tamil Nadu**.
Terukkuttu/Therukoothu	Tamil Nadu	It is a **street theatre** form practised in the state of Tamil Nadu in India and Tamil-speaking regions of Sri Lanka. The theme mainly focuses on epics like the **Mahabharata** and, in some instances, the Ramayana. The plays are a combination of song, music, dance and drama along with 'clever stage tricks'. The actors wear colourful costumes.
Ramman	Uttarakhand	It is a ritualistic theatre of the Garhwal region of **Uttarakhand**. It is dedicated to **Bhumiyal Devta**, the local deity. It is listed in the UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. People of the Bhandari caste wear the sacred mask symbolising Narasimha (half-man and half lion). Dances are performed and various songs are sung. Stories of Lord Rama are also narrated.
Burra Katha	Andhra Pradesh	Burra Katha is a popular story-telling tradition which derives its name from *Burra* – the **percussion instrument** used extensively during the performance. The performance consists of a main artist or narrator and two co-artists who provide the rhythm as well as the chorus.

Folk Theatre	State	Theme
Pagati Veshaalu	Telangana/Andhra Pradesh	It is the folk tradition popular in the Telangana region as well as the Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh. It is primarily a role-playing act, revolving around a principal character known as *vesham* (disguise) and other sub-characters.
Oggukatha	Andhra Pradesh	It derives its name from Oggu – a small hand drum associated with Lord Shiva. The drama literally means oggu-tales. It is performed by the pastoral communities such as Kuruma and Golla (Yadavs) of the Deccan plateau. These tradition-loving and ritual-performing troupes move from place to place, narrating the stories of their caste gods.
Tamasha	Maharashtra	Tamasha is a form of folk theatre known for its humour and erotic content. The unique feature of Tamasha is the presence of female actors, who even play male roles. Tamasha performances are generally accompanied by Lavani songs.
Powada	Maharashtra	When Shivaji killed his adversary Afzal Khan, a play was written lauding the heroic deeds of Shivaji, which later came to be known as Powada. They are operatic ballads depicting stories of valour and sung by the folk musicians known as Gondhalis and Shahirs.
Dashavatar	Maharashtra/Goa	It is a popular form of drama by the farmers of the Konkan region, notably Sindhudurg (Maharashtra) and North Goa. It is to honour the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu. It has two parts: 'poorva-ranga' (initial part) and 'uttara-ranga' (second part). The second session is the main act and is based on mythological stories.
Zadipatti	Maharashtra	Zadipatti derives its name from the local name zadi for rice. Performed in the rice cultivating region of Maharashtra during the harvest season, it is a blend of commercial and folk theatre form.
Swang/Saang	Rajasthan/ Madhya Pradesh (Malwar region)	Swangs are another popular source of entertainment in the region of Rajasthan and Haryana. They are mainly musical dramas, sung through verses, accompanied by the music of ektara, harmonium, sarangi, dholak and khartal. It also involves mimicry accompanied by dialogue.
Bhavai	Gujarat	This form incorporates an extensive use of dance to narrate a series of small plays. The theme of the play is generally romantic and the performers balance a number of earthen pots or brass pitchers. The play is accompanied by semi-classical music, played in a distinct folk style with instruments such as Jhanjhar and dholak. The *Sutradhar* is known as *Nayaka* in the Bhavai theatre.
Daskathia	Odisha	Daskathia is a form of folk theatre popular in Odisha. In this form, there are two narrators – Gayaka, who is the chief singer, and Palia, who is the co-narrator. The narration is accompanied by a dramatic music composed using a wooden musical instrument called kathia. The theme mainly revolves around Lord Shiva. A close variant of this form is the Chaiti Ghoda, which uses two musical instruments – dhol and mohuri – and three narrators.

Folk Theatre	State	Theme
Maach	Madhya Pradesh	Maach is the folk theatre of the region of Malwa in Madhya Pradesh. Initially, it was based on mythological themes such as the Mahabharata and Ramayana. Later, romantic folk tales were included into its repertoire. The unique feature of this form is the dialogues, which are delivered in the form of couplets known as *Rangat Dohas*.
Kariyala	Himachal Pradesh	It is a folk theatre form which is related to worshipping the local deity Bijeshwar, of the Solan, Shimla and Sirmour districts. of HP. It is practised mainly by the communities in the region. It is performed when agricultural prosperity is achieved in the region or personal wishes are fulfilled.
Jatra	West Bengal/ Eastern India	Jatra is a popular folk theatre of eastern India. It is generally an open-air performance that was initiated by Vaishnava Saint Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. During his travels through rural Bengal, he used the medium of Jatra to propagate the teachings of Lord Krishna. Later, variants such as Rama Jatra, Shiv Jatra and Chandi Jatra also came into existence that narrate stories of Puranic legends. In the modern times, Jatra is used to narrate stories of secular, historical and even patriotic themes. In Odisha, a popular form of street theatre known as Sahi Jatra is prevalent.
	Jammu and Kashmir	It is a folk theatre of Jammu and Kashmir. It involves contemporary social satire or even mythical stories. It is secular in outlook, although it is performed by Muslims. It has music, dance and drama.
Thok Lila	Manipur	It is a folk theatre which involves satire, wit and even comedy.
Ranmale	Goa	Ranmale is a ritualistic and folk theatre form based on mythological stories from the popular Indian epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. It is performed during the Holi festival which is celebrated as Shigmo (spring festival) in Goa and the Konkan region.
Tiatr	Goa	It is performed mainly in the Roman Konkani dialects and includes music, dancing and singing. Tiatr revolves around social, religious and political themes. It is considered to be a 'Mirror of Goan the Culture'.
Nacha	Chhattisgarh	It is performed by the rural communities there and it involves four different forms of Nacha: Gandawa Nacha, Khare Saaj Nacha, Dewar Nacha and Baithe Saaj Nacha. Usually held at night, comedy is an essential aspect of this folk theatre.
Shumang Leela	Manipur	Shumang Leela is a traditional form of theatre where the roles of women are played by men, called Nupi Shabis. 'Shumang' means 'open courtyard' and 'Leela' means 'play' and the literal meaning of Shumang Leela is 'play of the open courtyard'. It attempts to preserve and promote humanism, brotherhood, tolerance, confidence, devotion, truth and justice through its performances.

Modern Indian Theatre

India's post-medieval or modern theatre was shaped during the colonial era. Translations of both ancient Sanskrit texts and Western classics became available which gave an impetus to theatre. Works of **Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and Shakespeare** were adapted. Rise of cities such as

Calcutta (now Kolkata) and Madras (now Chennai) created a need for new forms of entertainment. Thus, the Western Proscenium Style of Theatre emerged in the 18th and 19th century. Many theatres sprang up in **Calcutta** in the 19th century such as the Belgachia Natyashala, Shobhabazar Natyashala, etc.

During the British era, Indians developed their own theatrical style combining the features of both Western and the Indian style. Theatres also became **commercialised**, with cost being imposed on viewership unlike the ancient past where theatre was mostly open to all. Common themes were social evils such as dowry, caste system, religious hypocrisy and even political affairs. The British Government even imposed the **Dramatic Performances Act in 1876** to counter the growing political awareness.

- **First Theatre in Calcutta (now Kolkata)** – *The Calcutta Theatre or The New Playhouse, founded in 1775 and active until 1808.*
- **First motion pictures in Bengal made by Hira Lala Sen** *were screened at The Star Theatre, Minerva Theatre and The Classic Theatre.*
- **First Theatre in Madras (now Chennai)** – *Gaiety Theatre was the first permanent cinema theatre set up in the then Madras by Mr Raghupathy Venkaiah.*

  There is also a Gaiety theatre in Shimla, since 1887.

Parsi Theatres were famous in western India during the 1850s–1920s, with plays being written in regional languages such as Gujarati and Marathi. Colourful backdrops and music were essential. The themes were romance, humour, melodrama, etc. From the 1930s, with the advent of cinema, many Parsi producers went into film-making.

Regional theatres of Bengal, Maharashtra, etc. also gained prominence. **Rabindranath Tagore** was a celebrated playwright. He wrote his first play at the age of 20 – *Valmiki Pratibha*. His famous works are *Raktakarabi* **(Red Oleanders)**, *Chitrangada*, *Post-Office*, etc. His themes included nationalism, spirituality, socio-political situation, etc. Other noted personalities were Prasanna Kumar Thakur, Girishchandra Ghosh, Dinabandhu Mitra (Nildarpan), etc.

In 1943, the Indian People's Theatre Association (ITPA) was formed as a cultural wing of Communist Party. Although it was **disbanded in 1947**, it played an important role in further development of theatre. Its theatre-artists wrote plays on various social themes such as Bengal famines, etc. Notable personalities associated with the ITPA were Balraj Sahni, Prithviraj Kapoor, Bijon Bhattacharya, Ritwik Ghatak, Utpal Dutt, etc. The IPTA now exists in Chhattisgarh, Punjab and West Bengal.

Prithvi Theatre was established in **1944** by Prithviraj Kapoor. It was a moving theatre with an entourage of 150 artists and held more than 2000 plays. It was only in 1978 when a permanent theatre was opened in Mumbai which still exists today.

In 1952, the **Sangeet Natak Akademi** was established for promoting performing the arts including theatre, giving further impetus to the development of theatre in India. The **National School of Drama** also contributed in producing great theatre personalities.

Kalakshetra Manipur was formed by *Heisnam Kanhailal* in 1969 in Manipur to keep the traditional theatre alive. Ratan Thiyam established the famous **Chorus Repertory Theatre in 1976**.

Girish Chandra Ghosh (1844–1912) *was a Bengali actor, director and writer. He was largely responsible for the golden age of Bengali theatre. He cofounded the Great National Theatre, the first Bengali professional theatre company in 1872, and wrote nearly 40 plays and acted and directed many more.*

Binodini Dasi (1863–1941) *(popularly known as* **Notee Binodini***) was a Bengali actress and theatre artist. She was the prima donna of Bengali theatre, and the first woman in India to become a notable stage performer from the Bengal Presidency in the 1870s. She began her career in acting at the age of 12 and ended by the time she was 23, as she later recounted in her noted autobiography, Amar Katha (The Story of My Life) which was published in 1913. She also made contributions in founding the Star Theatre in Kolkata in 1883.*

Samasa (Sami Venkatadri Iyer) (1898–1939) **and Adya Rangacharya** (1904–1984) *were noted Kannada dramatist and playwrights. Kuppali Venkatappa Puttappa, better known as* **Kuvempu** *(1904–1994), is another noted actor-playwright of Karnataka. Other eminent theatre personalities are Subramanya Bharathiar of Tamil Nadu, Veeresalingam Pantulu of Andhra Pradesh, Sreekandan Nair of Kerala, Bhartendu Harishchandra and Jaishankar Prasad.*

B.V. Karanth (1929–2002) *is known for his contribution to Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh theatre.*

K.V. Subbanna (1932–2005) *of Karnataka formed the acclaimed NINASAM theatre group and was also a winner of Ramon Magsaysay award.*

Other noted modern personalities are Indira Parthasarathy, Girish Karnad, Habib Tanvir, Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sarkar, Vijaya Mehta, Dharamvir Bharati, Mohan Rakesh, Chandrashekhar Kambar and P. Lankesh.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- **Ruins at Sitabena and Jogimara caves** – the world's oldest amphitheatres.
- **Rupaka, Drishyakavya and Preksakavya** – words used to describe drama.
- **Sariputraprakarana by Ashvaghosha** – first classical Sanskrit drama
- **Koothiyattam** – India's **oldest** continuing form of theatre and living tradition – since **the 10th century AD** – in **Kerala** – performed in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Malayalam.
- **Modern theatre** – Works of **Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and Shakespeare** were adapted – theatres sprang up in **Calcutta** in the 19th century such as Belgachia Natyashala, Shobhabazar Natyashala, etc.

CHAPTER 12

MARTIAL ARTS IN INDIA
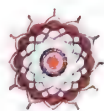
History of Martial Arts in India

Indian Martial Arts is rich and diverse, with a legacy of thousands of years. It was influenced by various cultures, regions and historical events that made it evolve and change over time. The ancient evidence of Indian Martial Arts can be known from the early epics like the **Ramayana** and the **Mahabharata**.

An Overview of the Evolution of Martial Arts in India

Vedic Texts (1500 BCE–600 BCE)

The earliest references of training and fighting techniques can be found in the Vedas. **Dhanurveda and Yajurveda** segments contain references to martial arts. These texts mention forms of combat known as **'dhanurvidya'** or **'angavidya'**, encompassing archery, the art of warfare, swordsmanship, the uses of weapons and the training of an army.

Early Epics (600 BCE–400 CE)

The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* contain detailed accounts of martial skills and warfare. The *Mahabharata* depicts a prolonged battle between Arjuna and Karna in which they used bows, trees, boulders, swords, and fists, and also defeating lions with just daggers. It is considered an inspiration for many practitioners of Indian martial arts.

Regional Influence (200 BCE–1200 CE)

Day-by-day, various regional martial art styles emerged. For example, **'Kalaripayattu'** from Kerala, **'Silambam'** from Tamil Nadu, **'Thang-ta'** from Manipur, and **'Gatka'** from Punjab are some of the traditional martial arts that originated during this period.

Effects of the Foreign Invasions (1200 CE–1800 CE)

Several foreign invasions like the Mongol invasion, Turk invasion, Persian invasion, and later the Mughal and the European invasions, helped in shaping various martial art techniques and strategies.

Modernisation of Martial Arts (Late 19th Century – Present)

Late 19th and early 20th centuries witnessed a change in traditional Indian martial arts. Several martial art masters and organisations have worked towards preserving and modernising the ancient techniques.
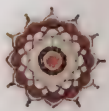
Various Existing Forms of Martial Arts in India

India, a land of diverse cultures and ethnicities, is known for its wide variety of martial arts that have developed since the ancient times. Earlier used for warfare, these art forms are today usually used for demonstration, as a part of a ritual, achieving physical fitness or as a means of self-defence. Martial art literally means 'arts associated with waging of war'. A number of martial art forms in the country are closely related to dance, yoga and the performing arts. The *pehlwani* style of wrestling was developed in the Mughal Empire by combining the native *Malla-Yuddha* with influences from the Persian *varzesh-e bastani*. Some of the art forms were banned during the British rule, including **Kalaripayattu and Silambam**, but they resurfaced and gained popularity post-independence. The popular martial arts in India are discussed as follows:

Kalaripayattu

One of the oldest martial arts in India, Kalaripayattu, although practised in most parts of Southern India, originated in the state of **Kerala** around the 3rd century BC. 'Kalari', a Malayalam word, refers to a specific type of school/gymnasium/training hall where martial arts are practised or taught.

Kalaripayattu

This art form includes mock duels (armed and unarmed combat) and physical exercises. It is generally **not** accompanied by any drumming or song, as the most important aspect is the style of fighting. Kalaripayattu's most important key is **footwork**; it also includes kicks, strikes and weapon-based practice. Even women practice this art. Kalaripayattu is still rooted in the traditional rituals and ceremonies.

Kalaripayattu includes a number of techniques and aspects. Some of them are: *Uzhichil* or massage with Gingli oil, **Fighting with Otta** (an 'S'-shaped stick), *Maipayattu* or body exercises, *Koltharipayattu* or use of wooden weapons for fight, *Angathari* or use of sharp metal weapons and sticks of Kolthari and *Verumkai* or bare-handed fight.

Kalaripayattu is mentioned in the **Vadakkan Pattukal**, which is a collection of Malayalam ballads of the medieval period. It was written about the **Chekavar (warrior surname)** of the Malabar region of Kerala.

Silambam

Silambam, a type of **staff fencing**, is a modern and scientific martial art form of **Tamil Nadu**. The Pandyas, Cholas and Cheras promoted it during their reign. The reference to the sale of *silambam* staves, pearls, swords and armour to foreign traders can be found in the Tamil literature *Silappadikaram*, which dates back to the 2nd century AD. The silambam bamboo stave was one of the most popular trading items with the traders and visitors from Rome, Greece and Egypt. This art is believed to have *expanded to Malaysia* from its originating state, where it is a famous sport apart from being a mode of self-defence.

The long staff was used for both **mock fighting** and **self-defence**.

There are different **kinds of techniques** that are used in Silambam including swift movements of the foot, use of both hands to wield the staff, use of thrust, cut, chop and sweep to achieve mastery and development of force, momentum and precision at different levels of the body (head, shoulder, hip and leg level). The player must be trained to diffuse an uncontrollable mob by using strokes like *snake hits*, *monkey hits* and *hawk hits* and also deflect stones thrown by them.

The official body of Silambam – **World Silambam Association (WSA)** was founded in 1999.

Thang-ta and Sarit Sarak

Created by the Meitei people of **Manipur**, **Thang-ta is an armed martial art** that finds its mention as one of the most lethal combat forms. **Sarit Sarak**, on the other hand, is an **unarmed art** form that uses hand-to-hand combat. Their history can be traced back to the 17th century when they were successfully used by the Manipuri kings to fight with the British. The capture of this region by the British witnessed the ban on these art forms; however, after independence there was a resurfacing of this art form.

Thang-ta

Thang refers to a **'sword'**, while Ta refers to a **'spear'**, thus the sword and the spear are the two main elements of Thang-ta.

The two components Thang-ta and Sarit Sarak are together called **Huyen Langlon**.

Gurumayum Gourakishor Sharma – leading exponent of Huyen Langlon, was awarded Padma Shri in 2009.

Mallakhamb

Mallakhamb is mainly practiced in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. It involves the use of **pole and rope**. It requires great concentration. In 2013, **Madhya Pradesh** declared Mallakhamb as the state sport.

Mallakhamb

References of some form of Mallakhamb can also be found in *Ramayana*, ancient Chandraketugarh pottery dating back to the second to first century BC, and also accounts of Buddhist Chinese pilgrims to India. The earliest direct literary mention of Mallakhamb appears in an 12th century text called **Manasollasa**, penned by Chalukya king Someshvara-III. Mallakhamb is divided into four categories, where each type is named after Hindu gods and legendary fighters:

- **Jarasandhi** – It concentrates on breaking the limbs and joints while fighting.
- **Bhimaseni** – It focuses on sheer strength.
- **Hanumanti** – It concentrates on technical superiority.
- **Jambuvanti** – It uses locks and holds to force the opponent into submission.

For long, Mallakhamb has been referred to as a **poor man's sport**, as its purveyors have mostly hailed from the deprived sections of the society. However, the sport is gaining popularity in the country ever since the Union Youth and Sports Ministry recognized it under **Khelo India Youth Games**.

Cheibi Gad-Ga

One of the most ancient martial arts of **Manipur**, *Cheibi Gad-Ga* involves fighting using a *sword and a shield*. It has now been modified to a stick encased in soft leather in place of a sword and a leather shield. The contest takes place in a circle of 7 *metre in diameter*, on a flat surface. Within the circle, there are two lines, 2 metres apart. The 'Cheibi' stick is between 2 and 2.5 ft in length, while the shield is around 1 metre in diameter. Victory in this contest is achieved according to the points earned during a duel. The points are awarded based on **skills** and brute force.

Pari-khanda

Pari-khanda, created by the **Rajputs**, is a form of martial art from **Bihar**. It involves fighting using sword and shield. Still practiced in many parts of Bihar, its steps and techniques are widely used in **Chhau dance**. The name of this martial art comes from two words, 'Pari' that means shield and 'khanda' which means sword, thus the use of both sword and shield in this art.

Pari-khanda involves the practice of chaalis or steps, which are associated with movements like the haathi chaali (elephant movement), baagh chaali (tiger movement) etc.

Thoda

Originating from **Himachal Pradesh**, *Thoda* is a mixture of martial arts, sports and culture. It takes place during *Baisakhi* festival in April every year. A number of community prayers are made so as to invoke the blessings of Goddesses Mashoo and Durga, the principal deities.

The martial art relies on a player's **archery skills**. *Thoda* can be dated back to Mahabharata, the times when **bows and arrows** were used in the epic battle, in the valleys of Kullu and Manali.

In the game, there are two groups of roughly 500 people each. Most of them are not archers but dancers who come along to boost the morale of their respective teams. The game is played in a marked court so as to ensure a certain degree of discipline. The two teams are called **Pashis** and **Saathis**, who are believed to be the descendants of the Pandavas and Kauravas of Mahabharata. The archers aim for the leg, below the knee, as there are negative points for striking any other parts of the body.

Gatka

Gatka is a weapon-based martial art form performed by the **Sikhs of Punjab**. The name 'Gatka' refers to the one whose freedom belongs to grace. Gatka features the skilful use of weapons, including stick, **Kirpan**, **Talwar** and **Kataar**. The attack and defence in this art form are determined by the various positions of hands and feet and the nature of the weapon used. It is displayed on a number of celebrations in the State including fairs. The Defendu system of martial art, devised by Captain William E. Fairbairn and Captain Eric Anthony Sykes prior to the Second World War, borrowed techniques from Gatka.
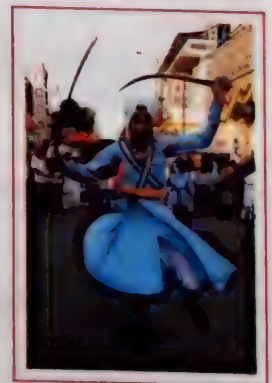
Gatka

Mardani Khel

This is a traditional **Maharashtrian** armed martial art, which is practised widely in the district of **Kolhapur**. *Mardani Khel* focuses primarily on skills of weaponry, especially swords, swift movements and use of low stances that is suited to its originating place, the hill ranges. It is known for the use of the unique Indian **Patta** (sword) and **Vita** (corded lance). Famous practitioners of this martial art included **Shivaji and Tanaji Malusare**. The martial culture of the Marathi people was mentioned by the Chinese monk **Xuanzang** in the 7th century.

Lathi

An ancient armed martial art form of the country, Lathi also denotes one of the **world's oldest weapons** used in martial arts. *Lathi* refers to a 'stick' (usually cane sticks), which is generally 6 to 8 ft in length and sometimes metal tipped. Indian police can be seen using such *Lathis* to control the crowd. Majorly practised in **Punjab and Bengal**, it still is one of the popular sport forms in villages.

Lathi

Inbuan Wrestling

A native martial art of **Mizoram**, Inbuan wrestling is believed to have its genesis in 1750 AD. It has very strict rules that prohibit stepping out of the circle, kicking and knee bending. The way to win this is by lifting the opponent off their feet, while stringently adhering to the rules. It also involves catching of the belt (worn around their waist) by the wrestlers.

Kuttu Varisai (*Empty-Hand Silambam*)

First mentioned in **Sangam literature**, *Kuttu Varisai* translates to 'empty hand combat'. *Kuttu Varisai* is mainly practised in **Tamil Nadu**, although it is quite popular in the north-eastern parts of **Sri Lanka** and **Malaysia**. An **unarmed** Dravidian martial art, it is used to advance athleticism and footwork through starching, yoga, gymnastics and breathing exercises. The major techniques used in this art include grappling, striking and locking. It also uses animal-based sets including snake, eagle, tiger, elephant and monkey. It is considered as an **unarmed component of Silambam**.

Musti Yuddha

Originated in one of the oldest city **Varanasi**, *Musti Yuddha* is an unarmed martial art form **resembling boxing**. It uses techniques like kicks, punches, knee and elbow strikes. Although rarely visible now, it was quite a popular art during the 1960s. *Musti-Yuddha* focused on the development of all the three aspects of training – physical, mental and spiritual.

The fights in this art are divided into four categories and are named according to the **Hindu Gods** that excelled the that particular kind of art from. The first one is called *Jambuvanti* that refers to forcing the opponent into submission through locking and holding. The second is *Hanumanti*, which is for technical superiority. The third refers to *Bhimaseni*, which focuses on sheer strength while the last one is called *Jarasandhi* and concentrates on limb and joint breaking.

Some Other Prominent Martial Arts of India

| Name of the Martial Art	Place of Origin	Description
Paika Akhada	Odisha	A combination of dance and combat. Earlier used by warriors, now practised as a performing art. The term 'Paika' refers to a warrior or soldier, and 'Akhada' refers to a training ground or arena. Earlier, it was practised by the Paikas, who belonged to the warrior communities of Odisha and were known for their bravery and skills. They played an important role in defending the region and served as soldiers and bodyguards to the kings and local chiefs.
Sqay	Kashmir	This martial art is known for its unique combination of sword-fighting techniques and graceful movements. The term 'Sqay' means 'knowledge of war'. It is now governed by Sqay Federation of India and was recognised as a sport by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in 2015. The official uniform of Sqay is blue in colour. Head guard and chest guard are worn along with the uniform.
...nu	Andhra Pradesh	It was practised by the royal armies. Kathi means 'sword'. Fighting with swords is the main feature of Kathi Samu. Various kinds of swords are used in Kathi Samu. The place where Kathi Samu is performed is known as 'garidi'. Kathi Samu starts with 'vairi' which plays a significant part before the real sword fight. 'Gareja' is another important part in which a person holds four swords, two in each hand. In ancient times, it was patronised by the Kingdom of Vizianagaram and Karvetinagaram.
Bandesh	India	Ancient unarmed art that uses various lock holds against an armed opponent without killing them.
Malla Yuddha	South India	Traditional combat wrestling related to other Southeast Asian wrestling styles including *Naban*. Famous practitioners included Siddhartha Gautama and Krishnadevaraya, etc.
Insuknawr	Mizoram	Players use round wooden rods to play this game within a circle.
Mukna	Manipur	Generally played on the last day of the festival of *Lai Haraoba*.
Kirip, Saldu	Nicobar	Also known as Nicobarese wrestling.
Varma Adi	Tamil Nadu	Attacks are aimed at the body's vital spots.
Adimurai	Tamil Nadu and Kerala	Believed to be developed by Tamil sages called Siddhars. Practised widely by the Nadar community of Tamil Nadu and by some of the Ezhavas and Nairs of South Kerala.
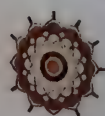
Benefits of Practising Martial Arts

There are enormous benefits of practising or training martial arts. They are as follows:

* Physical fitness is increased due to the exercise of the whole body and the entire muscular system. The brain is also activated. The training helps in boosting strength, stamina, flexibility, movement, coordination etc.
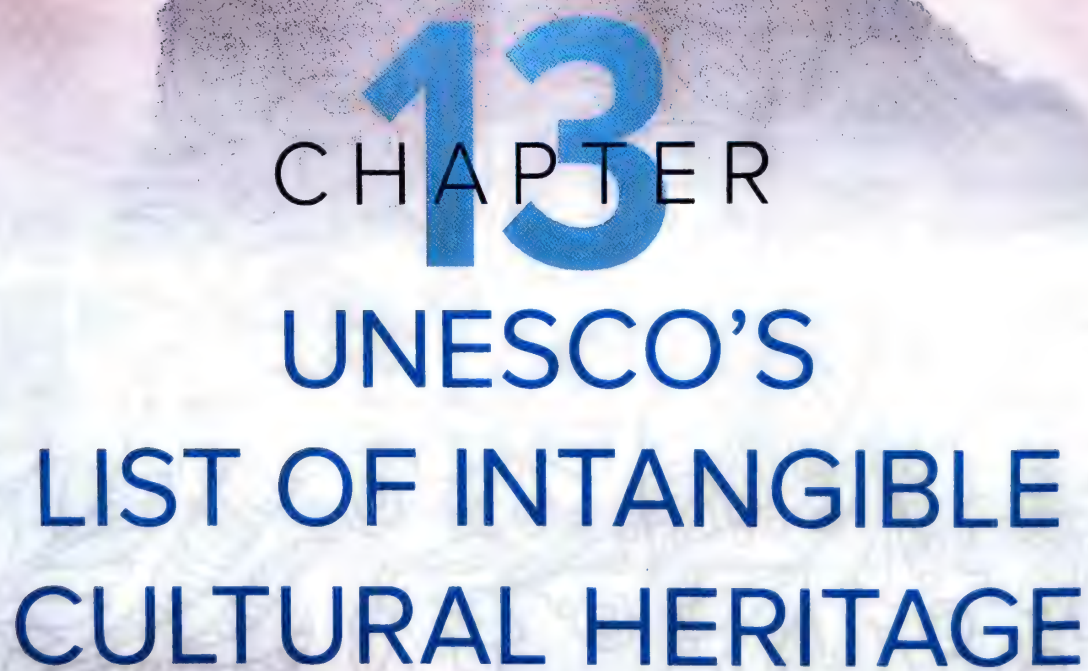
* It helps in emotional and spiritual well-being. Traditional martial arts also have therapeutic effects.

In a major thrust to promote indigenous games, Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports included Mallakhamb, Kalaripayyattu, Gatka, Thang-Ta, Silambam and Yogasan in Khelo India Youth Games.

Important Martial Arts
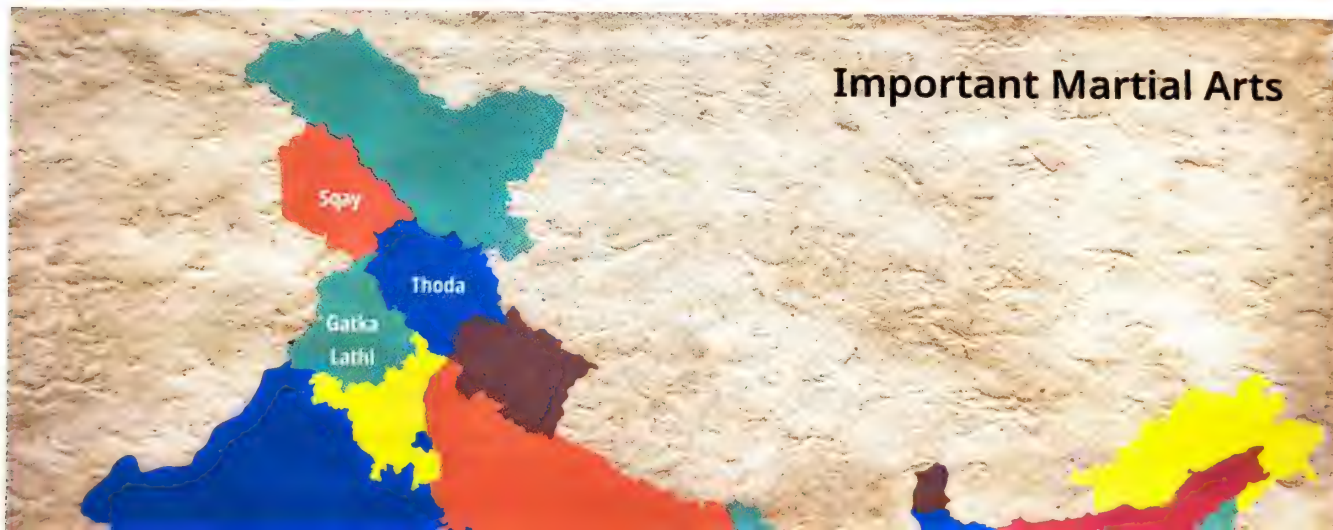
CHAPTER SUMMARY

- **Martial art** – 'arts associated with waging of war'.
- **Kalaripayattu** – originated in Kerala around the 3rd century BC – includes a number of techniques – banned during British rule. Kalaripayattu is mentioned in the **Vadakkan Pattukal**, which is a collection of Malayalam ballads.
- **Silambam** – modern and scientific martial art of Tamil Nadu – art is believed to have expanded to Malaysia – used for both mock fighting and self-defence. The official body of the Silambam – **World Silambam Association (WSA)** was founded in 1999.
- **Thang-ta** – created by the Meitei people of Manipur – an armed martial art.
- **Sarit Sarak** – created by the Meitei people of Manipur – an unarmed art form that uses hand-to-hand combat.
- **Cheibi Gad-Ga** – ancient martial arts of Manipur – involves fighting using a sword and a shield.
- **Pari-khanda** – created by the Rajputs – martial art from Bihar – widely used in Chhau *dance*.
- **Thoda** – mixture of martial arts, sports and culture – originated from Himachal Pradesh – takes place during Baisakhi festival.
- **Gatka** – weapon-based martial art form – performed by the Sikhs of Punjab – skilful use of weapons, including stick, Kirpan, Talwar and Kataar.
- **Mardani Khel** – traditional Maharashtrian armed martial art – practitioners included Shivaji.
- **Lathi** – world's oldest weapons used in martial arts – mainly practised in Punjab and Bengal.
- **Kuttu Varisai** – mentioned in Sangam literature – mainly practised in Tamil Nadu – popular in north-eastern part of Sri Lanka and Malaysia – unarmed Dravidian martial art – unarmed component of Silambam.
- **Musti Yuddha** – unarmed martial art form resembling boxing – originated in Varanasi – uses techniques such as kicks, punches and knee and elbow strikes.
- **Mallakhamb** – declared as the state sport of **Madhya Pradesh** in 2013.
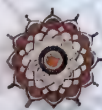- **Kathi Samu** – was patronised by the Kingdom of **Vizianagaram** and **Karvetinagaram**.

CHAPTER 13

UNESCO'S LIST OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Introduction

Cultural heritage does not end at monuments and collection of objects. It also includes **traditions** or **living expressions** inherited from ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as *oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge* and *practices concerning nature* and the universe or the knowledge and *skills to produce traditional crafts.*

UNESCO established its lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage with the aim of ensuring the better protection of important intangible cultural heritages worldwide and to create awareness of their significance. Through a compendium of the different oral and intangible treasures of humankind worldwide, the programme aims to draw attention to the importance of safeguarding intangible heritage.

Intangible Cultural Heritage means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills as well as instruments, objects and artefacts associated therewith that communities, groups and in some cases individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage.

UNESCO's programme has compiled two lists:

1. **The Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** – It comprises cultural practices and expressions that help demonstrate the diversity of this heritage and raise awareness about its importance.

2. **The List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding** – It is composed of those cultural elements that concern communities and countries considered vulnerable and require urgent measures to keep them alive.

The representative list is important from an exam's perspective.

Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

India has the following 14 items in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity:

Koodiyattam (Sanskrit Theatre), included in 2008

It is a combined dance drama from **Kerala** conducted by the **Chakyars** (a sub-caste among Hindus) who play the male role traditionally. The **women of the Ambalavasi Nambiar caste** play the female roles. The performance lasts for **6 to 20 days**. They are mainly enacted **inside the temples** and the theme is based on **Hindu mythology**.

The character **'Vidushaka'** explains in simple Malayalam the background of the story and gives a live image of the characters in the minds of the audiences. All other characters perform using the Sanskrit language. **Mizhavu** is the main musical instrument used in *Koodiyattam*.

Koodiyattam Theatre
Source: www.keralaculture.org

Ramlila, included in 2008

A popular folk theatre in the region of **Uttar Pradesh**, it is an enactment of **Ramayana** using songs, dances and dialogues, mainly during the period **before Dussehra**. Generally performed by male actors including the role of Sita. The play is staged annually over **10 or more successive nights**, during the auspicious period of 'Sharad Navaratras'.

Another **unique Ramlila** is being staged since 1972, at **Bakshi ka Talab near Lucknow**, where lead characters like Rama, Lakshman and Hanuman are played by **Muslim youths**, a clear departure from usual practice. This play has also been adapted into a radio play, *Us Gaon ki Ramlila* to promote **communal harmony** among the masses.

The Tradition in Vedic Chanting, included in 2008

The oral tradition of the Vedas consists of several *pathas*, 'recitations' or ways of chanting Vedic mantras. Such traditions of Vedic chanting are often considered as the **oldest unbroken oral tradition** in existence, the fixation of the Vedic texts as preserved dating roughly to the early Iron Age. UNESCO proclaimed the tradition of Vedic chanting a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

Ramman, included in 2009

A religious festival and **ritual theatre** of the **Garhwal region**, it is celebrated by the Hindu community in the Saloor-Dungra village of the Painkhanda Valley in the **Chamoli district** of **Uttarakhand**. The villagers pay their offerings to the village deity, **Bhumiyal Devta**, in the courtyard of the village temple. This festival is unique to this village and is not performed elsewhere in the Himalayan region. An important aspect is the singing of **Jagar**, a musical rendition of local legends.

Mudiyettu, included in 2010

A traditional **ritual theatre**, Mudiyettu is a folk dance and drama performed in the state of **Kerala**. It depicts the mythological tale of a battle between Goddess **Kali** and the demon **Darika**. The dance is performed in the **village temples**, called Bhagavati Kavus, after the harvesting season usually between February and May. The performers do heavy make-up and wear gorgeous attire with conventional facial painting, tall headgear, etc. to give the touch of the supernatural. Floor design of Goddess Kali is drawn (known as **Kalam**) and is then worshipped.

Mudiyettu Theatre
Source: www.keralaculture.org

Kalbelia, included in 2010

Performed by the tribe of the same name in the state of **Rajasthan**, Kalbelia dance movements resemble that of a **serpent**. The songs are based on mythology and it involves composing lyrics spontaneously and improvising songs during a performance. Musical instruments which accompany the performance include the Pungi, Chang and Cymbals.

Kalbelia Performance

Chhau, included in 2010

It is a tribal **martial** art dance performed mainly in the states of **Odisha**, **Jharkhand** and **West Bengal**. There are three sub-genres of this dance based on the place of their origin and development: Purulia Chhau (West Bengal), Seraikella Chhau (Jharkhand) and Mayurbhanj Chhau (Odisha). The dance is mainly performed during the spring festival and lasts for 13 days. The **whole community participates** in it. The dance is performed by **male dancers** at **night** in an **open space**. It is a blend of both dance and martial practices employing mock combat techniques. The theme of the Chhau dance is based on Hindu mythology. **Masks** are worn by dancers during the performance, except the Mayurbhanj Chhau.

Chhau Performance

Buddhist Chanting of Ladakh, included in 2012

It refers to the **recitation of sacred Buddhist texts** in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region in the state of **Jammu and Kashmir**. They mainly relate the two sub-sects of Buddhism: **Mahayana** and **Vajrayana**. Chanting is performed indoors or accompanied by duennas of monastery courtyards.

Sankirtana, included in 2013

It is a ritual singing, drumming and dancing art form of **Manipur** which originated in the 15th-century AD. This art form is performed to mark religious occasions and various stages in the life of Manipuri **Vaishnavites**. Practised mainly in **temples**, the performers here narrate the life and deeds of **Lord Krishna** through songs and dances. Sankirtana brings

people together on festive occasions and reinforces the relationship between the individual and the community through its performance in life cycle ceremonies. In a typical Sankirtana performance, two drummers and 10 singer-dancers perform in the hall of a domestic courtyard encircled by the devotees. Cymbals and drums are used as the main musical instruments.

Traditional Brass and Copper Craft of Utensil Making among the Thathera Community of Jandiala Guru in Punjab, included in 2014

This is an oral tradition that is passed on to generations of the **'Thathera' community**. The metals are heated and moulded into thin plates with curved shapes. The utensils have functional as well as ritualistic purpose. Metals used are brass, copper and kansa (an alloy of zinc, tin and copper). It is recommended for medicinal purposes in several Ayurveda related texts. It was patronised and **encouraged by Maharaja Ranjit Singh** in the 19th century. The utensils are of wide variety like those used in household and community kitchens (langar) of Sikh Gurudwaras.

Utensil Making by the Thathera Community

Nowrouz, included in 2016

It indicates the beginning of the **New Year for the Parsis** and is also celebrated as the spring festival by the Kashmiri community. It denotes **Zoroastrian respect for the environment**. In this festival, there is a custom to lay down a table and place a copy of the *Gathas*, light a lamp or a candle, put out a shallow ceramic plate with sprouted wheat or beans, a small bowl with a silver coin, flowers, painted eggs, sweets and a **bowl of water containing goldfish** in it. All these signify prosperity, wealth, colour and happiness.

Yoga, included in 2016

It consists of a series of poses, meditation, controlled breathing, word chanting and other techniques to help a person attain self-realisation. Traditionally, it was taught through **Guru–Shishya parampara**.

Kumbh Mela, included in 2017

Kumbh Mela is a mass Hindu pilgrimage to bathe in a sacred river. It is held at four places: **Prayagraj**, **Haridwar**, **Nashik** and **Ujjain**. At any of the above places, it is held after every 12

years. In Nashik and Ujjain it is called **Simhastha**. In Prayagraj and Haridwar, Kumbh Mela held after every 6 years is called Ardha Kumbh. Kumbh at Prayagraj is celebrated 3 years after Kumbh at Haridwar and 3 years before Kumbh at Nashik and Ujjain. It is celebrated in the same year or one year apart in Nashik and Ujjain.

Durga Puja in Kolkata, included in 2021

Durga Puja is an annual festival celebrated magnificently in September or October in the entire state of West Bengal. It is also celebrated in other parts of India and among the Bengali diaspora. It marks the worship of the Hindu mother-goddess Durga. It is the biggest festival in Kolkata. Before Durga Puja, artisans sculpt the images of Durga, using clay. The worship of mother-goddess Durga begins on Mahalaya, when her eyes are painted onto the clay images to bring the goddess to life. It ends on Dashami, which is the last day of this festival. This is an emotional festival for Bengalis as it is a 'home-coming' or a seasonal return to one's roots. The main attractions of Durga Puja in Kolkata are the pandals, lights, decorations, sculptures, food, gatherings and carnival. 'Durga Puja in Kolkata' received the Intangible Cultural Heritage status in 2021.

UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN)

According to UNESCO, Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was created in **2004** to promote cooperation among cities 'that have identified **creativity** as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development'. The Network **covers 7 creative fields**: Crafts and Folk Arts, Media Arts, Film, Design, Gastronomy, Literature and Music. As of July 2023, **six (06)** Indian cities have been incorporated into the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN):

1. **Srinagar** - Crafts and Folk Arts (2021)

2. **Hyderabad** – Gastronomy (2019)

3. **Mumbai** – Film (2019)

4. **Chennai** – Music (2017)

5. **Jaipur** – Crafts and Folk Arts (2015)

6. **Varanasi** – Music (2015)

CHAPTER SUMMARY

❁ **Koodiyattam** – Sanskrit theatre – included in 2008 –combined dance drama from Kerala – conducted by the **Chakyars** – the performance lasts from **6 to 20 days** – mainly enacted **inside the temples** – **Mizhavu** is the major musical instrument used.

❁ **Ramlila** – included in 2008 – folk theatre in the region of **Uttar Pradesh** – enactment of **Ramayana** using songs, dances and dialogues.

❁ **Ramman** – included in 2009 – religious festival and **ritual theatre** – from **Uttarakhand**.

❁ **Mudiyettu** – included in 2010 – traditional ritual theatre – performed in the state of **Kerala** – depicts the mythological tale of a battle between Goddess **Kali** and the demon **Darika**.

❁ **Chhau** – included in 2010 – tribal **martial** art dance – states of **Odisha**, Jharkhand and **West Bengal** – masks are worn by all dancers during the performance, except the Mayurbhanj Chhau.

❁ **Sankirtana** – included in 2013 – ritual singing, drumming and dancing art form of **Manipur** – practised mainly at **temples**.

❁ **Yoga** – included in 2016 – consists of a series of poses, meditation, controlled breathing, word chanting and others – taught through **Guru–Shishya parampara**.

❁ **Kumbh Mela** – included in 2017 – a mass Hindu pilgrimage to bathe in a sacred river – held at four places: **Prayagraj**, **Haridwar**, **Nashik** and **Ujjain**.

❁ **Durga Puja in Kolkata** – included in 2021 – an annual festival celebrated in September or October in West Bengal – biggest festival in Kolkata.

❁ **UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN)** – Srinagar, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Chennai, Jaipur and Varanasi.

CHAPTER 14

# TRIBAL CULTURE IN INDIA
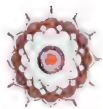
Introduction

India, often referred to as a land of diverse cultures and traditions, is home to a multitude of tribal communities scattered across various states and regions. These tribes have nurtured their unique identities, languages, beliefs, arts, music, and dance forms, creating a colourful tapestry of cultural heritage that enriches the nation. In this chapter, we will embark on a journey through the tribal cultures of India, exploring their fascinating diversity and the treasures they contribute to the nation's cultural mosaic.

India, often referred to as a land of diverse cultures and traditions, is home to a multitude of tribal communities scattered across various states and regions. These tribes have nurtured

their unique identities, languages, religions, arts, music, and dance forms since many years. The heritage of tribal population has built the aboriginal civilisation in the Indian subcontinent and has contributed to the nation's cultural mosaic in profound ways. Tribal language, culture and art reflect the creative energy found among the tribal people in different corners of India. In this chapter, we embark on an exploration of the captivating tribal cultures found in different states and regions of India.
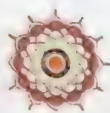
Tribes in India

The word **'Tribe'**, according to sociology, means, **"A unit of socio-political organisation consisting of a number of families, clans, or other groups who share a common ancestry and culture."** Hence, the term can be traced back to the 13th century medieval English where **'tribe'** was meant to be the biblical connation of **'the twelve tribes of Israel'**. The word is from Old French **tribu**, in turn from Latin **tribus**, referring to the original tripartite ethnic division of the Roman state.

The tribes in India are aboriginal people, also known as *Adivasi* population. Roughly, **8.6 per cent** of India's population is made up of Scheduled Tribes (STs) or traditional tribal communities.

Tribal people have inhabited the Indian subcontinent for a very long period of time. The species known as **Ramapithecus** was found in the Siwalik foothills of the northwestern Himalayas. From the anthropological perspective, the population of India can be classified into six main ethnic groups:

1. **Negritos**: The **Negritos** or the **brachycephalic** (meaning broad headed) from Africa were the *earliest people to inhabit India*. Example – Andamanis tribe in India.

2. **Pro-Australoids or Austrics**: After the Negritos, the Austrics came to inhabit India. They represent a race of people, with wavy and curly hair plentifully distributed over their brown bodies, long heads with low foreheads and prominent eye ridges, noses with low and broad roots, thick jaws, large palates and teeth and small chins. Austrics tribes, which are spread over the whole of India, are believed to **'form the bedrock of the people'**. They were the main builders of the Indus Valley Civilisation.

3. **Mongoloids**: These are the people who have features that are common to those of the people of Mongolia, China and Tibet. These tribal groups are mainly located in the Northeastern states, viz. Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalya, Sikkim and also in Ladakh.

4. **Dravidian**: The Dravidians spread all over India, surpassing the population of the first two peoples Negritos and Austrics. *This group constitutes the bulk of the scheduled castes in the North India*. This group has a sub-type called **Oriental group**.

5. **Western Brachycephals:** The Parsi population of India is believed to be the descendants of this group.

6. **Nordics:** Nordics or **Indo-Aryans** are the last immigrants into India. They comprise the group of Indo-Iranians. Though they built their first settlements in western and northern

Punjab, gradually they spread to the Ganges Valley and beyond. In present time, they are divided into several units of tribes having different cultures.

Culture is reflected through the various components which help to shape the values, customs, rituals and laws over a long time. The main constituents of any culture in any society are Language, Religion, Music, Dance and Artforms.

Tribal Languages in India

Based on the development from different ethnic groups, the Indian languages can be divided into six groups as follows:

1. Indo-Aryan
2. Dravidian
3. Sino-Tibetan
4. Negroid
5. Austric
6. Others

Languages of India are numerous due to the diversity in tribes in India. It is found that often one language is spoken in different dialects within the same tribal group.

The tribal languages are essentially 'folk' languages, spoken by people of ethnic groups who prefer to live in relatively isolated groups. These languages which have emerged from the tribal languages spoken during time immemorial are preserved orally in the form of songs, folktales and legends.

Indian tribal languages are extremely orderly and well organised, owing to a developed past and the enlightened educational interference. **Garo** and **Chakma** languages have a slight Chinese hint to their diction. There lies an elementary similarity between the Garo and Magh languages, as both tribes belong to the same origin. **Munda, Santhali, Kol, Khasi, Garo** and **Kurukh** are interrelated languages. **Munda** and **Kurukh** are regarded as equivalent languages as the syntax and verbs of both are almost identical.

Munda, Santhali and **Kol** languages are even more ancient than the Indo-Aryan languages.

Indian tribal languages can be classified in a few categories as shown below.

Indian Tribal Languages

- Indo-Aryan Tribal Languages
- Tibeto-Burman Tribal Languages
- Dravidian Tribal Languages
- Austro-Asiatic Tribal Languages
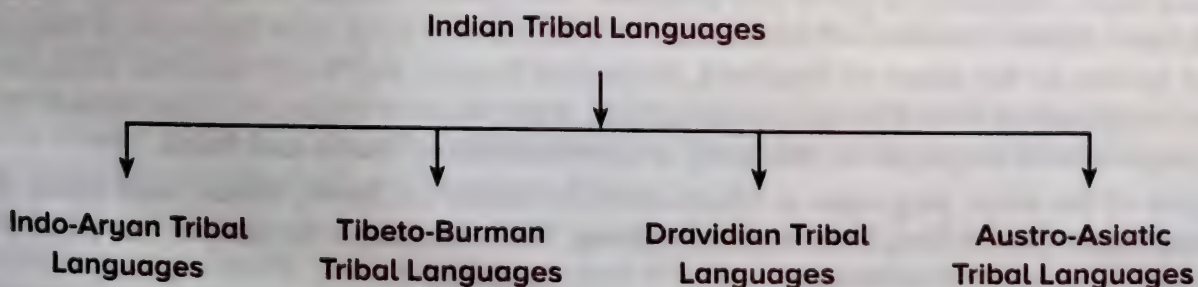
Indo-Aryan Tribal Languages

Indo-Aryan tribal language speakers are distributed over a huge geographical territory of the country. The northern, eastern, western and central portions of India are full with people who speak the Indo-Aryan languages. More than 574 mother tongues comprise this family of tribal language in India. Some of these Indo-Aryan tribal languages are mentioned below:

* Three main languages among the tribal languages under the Indo-Aryan families are **Bhili language, Khandeshi** and **Halabi.** They are mainly spoken in **Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.**

* **Khandeshi** group of language in the Indo-Aryan family of tribal languages comprises almost five main mother tongues. This language is spoken by a total of almost 1.2 million people.

* **Kawari and Katkari languages** belonging to the Indo-Aryan tribal language family are spoken by the people of the areas of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra. It is spoken by the tribes of some parts of Gujarat and Maharashtra.

* Tribes of the state of Jammu and Kashmir speak **Kishtwari.**

* **Koch** is spoken by tribes of Tripura and Assam and in Cooch Behar district of the state of West Bengal.

* **Konkani and Goanese** are two very popular Indo-Aryan tribal languages that are spoken in the coastal areas of Maharashtra and Goa.

* **Halbi** or **Halabi** is spoken by almost half a million people in the states of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

Tibeto-Burman Tribal Language

This family of language is mainly spoken in the northern and north-east regions of India. The name is derived due to the similarity of the languages spoken by this family of tribes to that of the language spoken in Myanmar (earlier Burma).

* Nine languages of the Bodo sub-family of the Tibeto-Burman language family constitute the largest group of tribal languages in the country. These major nine languages of this sub-family are **Bodo, Garo, Tripuri, Mikir, Rabha, Dimasa, Lalung, Deori and Koch**. These languages are spoken by over half of the tribal population spread in the Brahmaputra valley, North Cachar Hills in Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura.

* Languages belonging to other sub-groups of the Tibeto-Burman tribal language family are spoken by smaller number of populations. For instance, twenty-four languages of Naga group are spoken in the states of Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and North Manipur Hills; twenty-five languages of Kuki-Chin group are spoken in the states of Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura. The prominent languages in this group are **Lushai/Mizo, Thado and Paite**.

* Some of the tribal languages in Tibeto-Burman family are **Bodo, Mikir, and other allied languages like Rabha, Dimasa and Lalung.** These languages are used by the tribal people in the entire state of Assam.

* **Bodo** language is one of the popular Indian tribal languages belonging to the Tibeto-Burman language family, which is a sub-group of the *Sino-Tibetan language* group. It is mostly spoken by the Bodo people residing in the north-eastern region of India and by the people of the neighboring country of Nepal. Bodo language has got the status of one of the official languages of the state of Assam. Bodo language is closely associated with the **Dimasa** language of the state of Assam and with the **Garo** language of the state of Meghalaya.

Dravidian Tribal Languages

* This family of language spoken in the Indian subcontinent mainly comprises the tribal languages spoken in the southern parts of India.
* Some of the initial languages in this family such as **Kudu** are not considered to belong to this family of languages since it has been merged with the Kannada language.
* Some important languages in this group are **Kolami, Kui, Konda, Koya, Gondi, Oraon/ Kurukh and Parji.**
* **Kaikadi** is a major Dravidian tribal language that is spoken by the **Kaikadi** tribes in several parts of Karnataka and Maharashtra.
* Another Dravidian tribal language is **Kanikkaran** that is spoken in Ernakulam, Thiruvananthapuram and Kozikhode districts of Kerala and Tirunelveli district of the state of Tamil Nadu.
* **Konda-Dora** is another Dravidian language which is spoken in several areas of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.
* **Koraga** is spoken in parts of Kerala.
* **Kota** is another Dravidian language which is mainly spoken in parts of Tamil Nadu.
* **Koya** is spoken in several parts of Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. Its main dialects are **Podia, Malakanagiri Koya and Chintoor Koya.**
* **Kamar** is another tribal language belonging to the Dravidian family and spoken by the tribal communities in the areas of Rewa district of the state of Madhya Pradesh and in Raipur district of the state of Chhattisgarh. It is also spoken in parts of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra and Odisha.

Austro-Asiatic Tribal Languages

* These languages are spoken mainly in the states of West Bengal, Jharkhand and in some parts of the north-eastern states of India.
* **Kharia** language is an Indian tribal language belonging to the Austro-Asiatic language family and is mostly spoken by the tribal people living in the states of Jharkhand, Odisha, Assam, and eastern Madhya Pradesh and southern Bihar.
* **Santhali** is an Indian tribal language that belongs to the Santhali sub-family of the Austro-Asiatic language family. This language is very closely associated with **Ho** and **Mundari** languages. In India, this language is spoken in the states of Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand,

West Bengal, Odisha and Tripura. Santhali language is mainly spoken by the **Santal** tribal community. It is also spoken in neighbouring countries of India like Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan.

* This tribal community is the **largest tribal community of the country**. Santhali language is basically a dialect of **Munda** tribal language.

* It is generally believed that Santhali language is much older than the Aryan language. Currently, the Santhali tribal language is not much in use anymore. The Santhali pundits use the language for literary works and religious documents. This language is very famous for its numerical classifier which is alien to those of the Dravidian family of languages.

* **Khasi** language, a popular Indian tribal language in the Austro-Asiatic tribal language family, is spoken mainly by the tribal people of the state of Meghalaya. This language is a part of the **Khasi-Khmuic group** of languages. Khasi language is vaguely connected with the Munda branch of the Austro-Asiatic group of languages that is mainly found in east-central region of India. In India, most of the speakers of the Khasi language are found in the state of Meghalaya. However, this language is also spoken by a huge number of people of the hill districts in the state of Assam. Quite a few speakers of Khasi language are found in the neighbouring country of Bangladesh. Khasi language is tremendously rich in legends and folk stories. Interestingly, this language had no script of its own in the past.

* Khasi language has various dialects, namely, standard **Khasi, Langrin, Bhoi, Nongtung** and **Lyngngam**. Among the five varieties, standard Khasi, Langrin and Lyngngam are similar whereas Bhoi and Nongtung are very different.

Some Prominent Tribal Languages in India

Some of the popular languages spoken by the tribes of India are as follows:

Bhatri, Bhilli, Bhunjia, Chakma, Chhattisgarhi, Dhanki, Dhodia, Hundhari, Gadiali, Gamit/Gavti, Garasia/Girasia, Gojri/Gujjari, Hajong, Halbi, Harauti, Hindi, Jaunsari, Kachchi, Konkani, Marathi, Mavchi, Mewnri, Nagpuri, Naikadi, Nimari, Oriya, Rathi, Sardohi, Shina, Tharu, Wagri, Warli among many others.

* Some prevalent tribal languages in India are **Abujmaria, Garo, Aaria Tsangla and Saurashtri.**

* **Garo**: It is spoken by the tribal communities residing around Garo Hills, Meghalaya, Tripura, Western Assam and Nagaland. Several dialects of this language include Megam, Chisak and Atong.

* **Abujmaria**: It is spoken by the people of Abujmar hills in Bastar district.

* The **Paite, Thadou, Hmar** and **the Tangkhul** languages are some of the tribal languages spoken in most of the north-eastern parts of India. Some tribes using these leading tribal languages are Garo, Chakma, Naga, Gond, Mizo, Santhali, Khasi, Oraon and Manipuri tribesmen.

* **Gadaba**: It is spoken by the people of Koraput district of Odisha.
* **Ariya**: It is spoken by the tribal communities of Madhya Pradesh.
* **Tsangla**: It is spoken in some villages of Arunachal Pradesh.
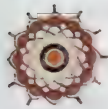
Tribal Music and Dance

Dance forms of Tribes

Tribal music and dance in India have profound significance in cultural heritage of India. The music and dance forms of tribes not only serve as artistic forms of communication but also play a pivotal role in preserving indigenous traditions, fostering social cohesion, and promoting a sense of identity among tribal communities. The importance of tribal music and dance transcends mere aesthetics. Beyond their aesthetic values, they act as unifying forces strengthening social bonds within the community and creating a sense of belongingness. In modern rapidly changing world, when traditional ways of life face modern challenges, these art forms play a vital role in safeguarding indigenous knowledge and customs.

Some examples of tribal music and dance forms of different regions of India are given below.

th-eastern Region

Tribes

* **Sekrenyi Dance**: Celebrates purification and renewal during the Sekrenyi festival.
* **Zeliang Dance**: Performed by the Zeliang tribe, depicting their agrarian lifestyle.

Mishing Tribe (Assam)

* **Bihu Husori**: Traditional music and dance during the Bihu festival in Assam. Village elders move from household to household singing Bihu carols known as *Husori*.
* **Ali-Aye Ligang Dance**: Celebrates agriculture and reflects their reverence for nature.

Garo Tribe (Meghalaya)

* **Wangala Dance**: A joyful performance expressing gratitude to the Sun God for a good harvest.
* **Dama Gogata Dance:** Symbolises unity and harmony within the community.

Western Region

Bhil Tribe (Gujarat, Rajasthan)

* **Bhavai Dance**: A dynamic dance form narrating mythological stories.
* **Tera Tali Dance:** Performed with cymbals tied to different parts of the body, creating rhythmic sounds.

Warli Tribe (Maharashtra)

* **Tarpa Dance:** Accompanied by soulful music and reflective of their agrarian life.
* **Gauri Dance**: Depicts celebrations during festivals and weddings.

Eastern Region

Santhal Tribe (Jharkhand, West Bengal)

* **Baha Dance:** Celebrates life and nature during the Spring festival. (tribal women and men dancing on the beats of drums and offering flowers to God *Marang Buru* **and** *Jaher Ayo*)
* **Chhau Dance:** A blend of martial arts and storytelling, performed during various occasions.

Bondo Tribe (Odisha)

* **Gotul Dance:** Graceful dance form performed during weddings and festivals.
* **Saura Dance**: Reflects their connection with nature and ancient traditions.

Southern Region

Irula Tribe (Tamil Nadu)

* **Puliarai Dance**: Expresses their intimate relationship with nature and their snake-catching skills.
* **Kaliyal Dance**: Depicts agricultural activities and captures their daily life.

Kurava Tribe (Kerala)

* **Mudiyettu**: A ritualistic dance-drama narrating tales of deities and folklore.
* **Kolkali**: A group dance performed with rhythmic steps and sticks.

Central Region

Tribes of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh

* **Gondi Songs**: Songs of Gond tribe which reflect their history, daily life, and relationship with nature.
* **Gaur Maria Dance**: A dynamic dance form expressing joy and celebration performed during the occasion of marriage in the plateau of Bastar. While the men put head-dresses with stringed *'cowries'* and plumes of peacock feathers, women are usually adorned with brass fillets and bead necklaces with their tattooed bodies.
* **Karma Dance**: Performed during the annual Karma festival during the worship of the God of fate, which is known as Karam Devta.
* **Saila Dance**: Reflects their deep connection with nature and forests by Gonds, Oraons and Baigas.

Songs/Music of Tribes

Most tribes in India have songs for different types such as greeting songs, lullabies, love and courtship songs, ballads, and humorous songs. These songs are usually sung on the occasion of

certain festivals and celebrations where members of the tribes dance and sing for the pure joy of it. On such occasions, one may also hear songs *describing their ancestry and the origin of the tribe.*

Some prominent Tribal or Folk music forms of India are

* **Relo**: It is a form of tribal song of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh performed by the Muria tribe and Sing Mari tribes residing in the Bastar district.

* **Dhankul geet**: It is a style of folk song performed by tribal people native to Chhattisgarh. It is a religious song performed during special occasions. It is sung mainly during the rituals performed for invoking Goddess Danteshwari.

* **Bihugeet**: Performed during the Bihu festival, it is melodious music with simple lyrics describing the daily life activities of the Assamese.

* **Zeliang**: A very beautiful and vibrant form of folk, Zeliang of Nagaland is a primitive style of music performed primarily by the Zeliang tribe. The songs talk about the history of Nagaland and have a composition one can instinctively relate to.

* **Maand**: This is a folk music of Rajasthan played on Sarangee and other percussion instruments.

* **Mire Domung**: Folk song of the **Adi** tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. It is the source of pleasure and happiness and also the way to express sorrows, which always bring fresh inspiration, spirits and enthusiasm to the eternal soul of the society.

* **Baryi**: This is a folk music of Arunachal Pradesh representing the history, mythology and religious lore of the state. The long song of Baryi is an important feature of every social or religious event or celebration.

Tribal Religion

Religion is a significant part of the tribal culture and its heritage. While many members of these tribes have adopted variants of Hinduism, Islam, or Christianity, a considerable number still adhere to their traditional tribal religions, with varying degrees of syncretism.

Animism and all forms of **pagan worship** are still prevalent in these communities. The festivals in these communities are also much of a delight to see with its colourful and joyous celebrations.

A lot of the tribal population in India is still backward. They lack education, and literacy policies are yet to dawn in a few rural and tribal areas of the Indian subcontinent.

Gujjar tribal community of Himachal Pradesh has predominently adopted the religion of Islam.

In some instances, tribal religion has influenced mainstream religious practices. The festival of light, Diwali, has also been adopted by the Hindus, which was originally believed to be the festival of the aborigines. It is also believed that the Hindu religion borrowed the worship of Lord Shiva and Paravati from the Adivasis of Gujarat.

However, it is observed that Christianity has brought about a change that can be termed a 'total transformation' in tribal lifestyle and outlook, especially in the north-eastern states of India.

The **largest and best-known tribal religion** of India is '**Saridharam**' of the Santhal tribes residing in Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, and neighbouring regions. The Santhals and other Indian tribes practise, profess and propagate their own traditional tribal religions since time immemorial. They have their own Gods and Goddesses (who do not belong to Hindu pantheon or any other Indo-Aryan pantheon) and separate places of worship which is completely different from other Indo-Aryan religions.

Sarna religion is the religion of the Munda and Oraon tribes.

Some folk religions prevalent in India are mentioned below.

* **Animism**: It is the worldview that non-human entities (animals, plants and inanimate objects or phenomena) possess a spiritual essence. The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Society estimates that 1–5% of India's population is animist.

* **Ahom religion**: It **is the ethnic religion of the Ahom peopl**e. The religion is based on ritual-oriented ancestor worship that requires animal sacrifice.

* **Bathouism** (or **Bathou**): It is the folk religion of the Boro people of Assam in north-east India. The name *Bathou* in Boro **means** *five principles* (Ba means five and thou means deep). These five principles are: bar (air), orr (fire), ha (earth), dwi (water) and okhrang (ether). The chief deity called **Bathoubwrai** is considered the Supreme God and is said to have created the five principles.

* **Donyi-Polo** or **Donyi-Poloism**: It is the indigenous religion of animistic and shamanic type of the Tibeto-Burman peoples of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam in north-east India. The name 'Donyi-Polo' means 'Sun-Moon'; *Donyi* (Sun) and *Polo* (Moon) – which are, respectively, female and male in the Tibeto-Burman tradition. The Donyi-Poloism has been there since time immemorial.

* **Kirat Mundum**: Also known as **Kiratism**, it is an animistic folk religion that is indigenous to the Kirati ethnic groups of Nepal, Darjeeling and Sikkim, majorly practised by Yakkha, Limbu, Sunuwar, Rai, Thami, Jirel, Hayu and Surel peoples in the north-eastern Indian subcontinent. The practice is also known as **Kirat Veda.**

* **Sanamahism** or **Meiteism** or **Lainingthouism**: It is an ethnic religion of the Meitei people mainly in the state of Manipur in Northeast India. It is a polytheistic religion and is named after God **Lainingthou Sanamahi**, one of the most important deities of the Meitei faith.

* **Sarnaism**: It is an Indian religious belief in the eastern regions of the subcontinent. The belief is based on worship at Sarna, *the sacred groves* in the Chota Nagpur Plateau region in the states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Odisha. According to local belief, a **Gram deoti** or *village deity* resides in the Sarna, where sacrifice is offered twice a year. Their belief system is alternatively known as 'Sarna Dharma', or 'Religion of the Holy Woods'

Tribal Art

Tribal art forms are important ingredients of the diverse cultural heritage of the Indian tribal culture due to their aesthetic mastery and richness in the traditional art preserved through

generations. The artforms range from design and painting to handicrafts made of bamboo, wood and metals.

Some notable and unique tribal art forms from India are as follows:

✴ **Warli Painting**: This indigenous tribal art of Maharashtra is well known for its simple wall paintings. On a background of dark red, these paintings are carved in white (with a bamboo brush). Warli art design uses basic geometrical shapes including the square, circle and triangle featuring incidents from everyday life, including dancing, fishing, farming and festivals. These artworks are strikingly similar to the murals of Bhimbetka, Madhya Pradesh.

✴ **Bhil Art:** The Bhils are India's second-largest tribal group who live in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra. Traditionally, the clay walls of the Bhil people's hamlet homes are decorated with lovely pictures while using natural dyes. These pictures are generally painted with neem sticks and other twigs.

Warli Painting, Maharashtra

Bhil Art, Rajasthan

✴ **Gond Art:** The word 'Gond' comes from the Dravidian word *Kond* which means green mountain. Gond Paintings are done by the Gond tribe of Mandla, Madhya Pradesh. These paintings are done to decorate the walls and floors of the house by the tribal communities. One distinct feature of these paintings is the use of dashes, dots and vibrant colours. The paintings are created with the use of dots which are placed one over the other in an upward fashion to create the desired image. The colours used in the paintings are obtained using natural ingredients like charcoal, coloured soil, plant sap, leaves, etc. The theme of paintings is mostly drawn from folktales and Gond mythology.

Gond Painting, Madhya Pradesh

❋ **Pithora Paintings:** These are paintings created by **Bhilala** and **Rathwa** tribes who are the inhabitants of central Gujarat. They originated from the mural traditions of the ancient tribes. The major themes of the paintings are Gods and Goddesses with some appearances of nature and agriculture. The primary God depicted in these paintings is *Pithora Dev*. These paintings are usually drawn on a wall through a procedure known as **Lipna,** which includes spreading two layers of cow dung and a single layer of chalk powder on it.

Pithora Painting, Gujarat

❋ **Phad paintings**: It is primarily a religious style of scroll painting practised in Rajasthan. These are painted on canvas or fabric called phad and feature the folk gods Pabuji or Devnarayan. The gum and the burnished surface are the main reasons for the longevity and vibrancy of Phad paintings. The style uses a flat perspective and bright colours.

❋ **Traditional jewellery** of tribes from Odisha like Bonda, Kondh, Saora, Gadaba, etc. Tribes usually adorn themselves with many brasses or aluminum rings piled on top of each other around their necks, as well as gorgeous glass bead necklaces. These represent intricately crafted metal ornaments showcasing the skill of tribal people in metalwork.

❋ **Irula Snake Art**: This is a unique art made from naturally molted snake skins by Irula snake catchers of Tamil Nadu, reflecting their intimate connection with nature.

❋ **Kurava Wood Carving**: Elaborate wood carvings on furniture and decorative items made by the people of Kurava tribe of Kerala showcasing their craftsmanship.
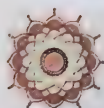
❋ Preserving Tribal Culture

The intangible cultural heritage of Indian tribes is the epitome of the traditional knowledge system which contains many positive and productive elements which are really invaluable for the entire humanity. These elements of intangible heritage face serious threats of existence due to modernisation in the society and rapid change in way of life across the country. Thus, coordinated efforts are required to preserve the traditional culture within the successive generations of tribal population.

Some noteworthy initiatives by the government in the field of preservation of tribal cultural heritage are:

❋ **'Sankalp Se Siddhi'** initiative- This is an initiative of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, launched in 2021 and implemented by **Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED)**. This scheme (also known as **'Mission Van Dhan'**) is aimed to establish a sustainable livelihood for India's tribal population through the establishment of several Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs), haat bazaars, mini TRIFOOD units, common facility centres, TRIFOOD parks, tribes India retail store for promoting Indian brands of works done by tribal artisans.

* **Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)**: The scheme covers activities for them like housing, land distribution, land development, agricultural development, animal husbandry, construction of link roads, etc.
* **Support to Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs)** and Tribal Festivals through proper research and raising awareness among masses.

Special Development Councils (SDCs) Model of Odisha

In a significant move towards preserving, promoting, and popularising tribal culture, the Odisha government launched the Special Development Councils (SDCs) initiative in 2017. This is an active effort to preserve the culture and heritage of 62 tribes in the state under one umbrella while keeping economic development on course in the regions.

* The Scheme covers 23 districts and more than 84 lakh tribal people.
* SDC's model: In this model, important cultural markers that are a reflection of tribal identity are identified and promoted.
* Language is recognised as an important marker of culture.
* As Odisha is a land of over 22 diverse tribal languages, the focus is on the use and propagation of these languages.
* Over 21 tribal proficiency centres have been established.
* These have modules to educate frontline workers like ASHA workers and non-Odia speakers about tribal culture and dialect.
* More than 4,500 sacred groves that were close to vanishing from the village landscape are now being conserved.
* These groves hold immense cultural and conservational value for the tribal population, as they are considered to be inhabited by the gods. Resource extraction in these groves is strictly prohibited.
* More than 4,730 sacred groves are under protection in nine districts, and 1,609 tribal cultural clubs have been set up.
* Artisan ID cards have been issued to over 40,000 tribal artisans.
* This initiative not only preserves culture, but also enables employment opportunities.
* To ensure an efficient transfer of knowledge, more than 50 Tribal Resource Centres have been constructed in Sundargarh district. More are coming up in the remaining districts.
* The SDC model also helps to preserve the culture and tradition of small tribal groups by giving them a role in decision-making processes. Thus, it takes care of intra-tribal majoritarianism.
* This is based on **5T** (transparency, technology, teamwork, time-limit, leading to transformation)-driven development model through which **vision of inclusive growth and community-led development** has been an **actionable strategy for Odisha.**

CHAPTER SUMMARY

* The word '**Tribe**', according to sociology, means, "A unit of socio-political organisation consisting of a number of families, clans, or other groups who share a common ancestry and culture."

* The tribes in India are aboriginal people also known as **Adivasi** population.

* From the anthropological perspective, the population of India can be classified into six main ethnic groups – **1. Negritos, 2. Pro-Australoids or Austrics, 3. Mongoloids, 4. Dravidian, 5. Western Brachycephals** and **6. Nordics**

* The main constituents of any culture in any society are **Language, Religion, Music, Dance and Artforms**.

* Based on the development from different ethnic groups, the Indian languages can be divided into six groups as follows:

   1. Indo-Aryan; 2. Dravidian; 3. Sino-Tibetan; 4. Negroid; 5. Austric and 6. Others

* Most prominent tribal languages of India are – **Bodo, Garo, Khasi, Santhali, Munda**, etc.

* Some traditional tribal dance forms are **Wangala, Dama Gogata, Tera Tali, Baha, Gotul, Saura, Puliarai, Gaur Maria Dance**, etc.

* Some prominent tribal or folk music forms of India are – **Relo, Dhankul, Bihugeet, Zeliang, Maand, Mire Domung, Baryi**, etc.

* The largest and best-known tribal religion of India is **Saridharam** of the Santhal tribe-Sarna religion is the religion of the Munda and Oraon tribes.

* Some folk religions are **Animism, Ahom religion, Bathouism, Donyi-Poloism, Sanamahism** and **Sarnaism**.

* Some notable and unique tribal art forms from India are – **Warli folk paintings, Bhil Art, Gond Art, Pithora Paintings, Phad paintings, Irula Snake Art, Kurava wood carving**, etc.

* **Special Development Councils (SDCs)** of Odisha are an excellent model of tribal culture preservation.

CHAPTER 15

TRADE, TRADERS AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE
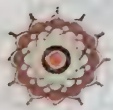
Introduction

There has been a very close relationship between trade, trade routes, culture and politics. Though the ancient Indian literature has little work like the *Periplas of the Erythraean Sea*, some ancient Indian texts like **Mahaniddesa** and *Arthashastra* inform about commercial activities, ancient land and sea trade routes. The establishment of the Roman empire opened the Red Sea route. The archaeological finds from the ancient Indian ports throw significant light on burgeoning trade between India and the Roman empire. A major reason for the war between the Satvahanas and Sakas was the control of trade route with the Roman empire. One of the reasons behind Rajendra Chola's naval expedition to Suvarnabhumi was trade.

Mineral resources, agricultural growth and surplus in the hinterland led the ruler to give importance to the commerce and overseas trade and develop commodity production and exchange. Brisk trade activities were necessary preconditions for urban growth. According to **Keralolpathi,** there were several Brahmin settlements which spread across south India. This led to the proliferation of agriculture. Better technological devices and managerial strategies facilitated the growth of cultivation and the introduction of a variety of crops. The proliferation of land management and farming necessitated the exchange of products in the market places. It led to the production of other non-agrarian products to be exchanged in the market, which accelerated commercial activities. We have numerous archaeological, epigraphic and literary evidences which elaborate on the commercial contacts between the Roman world and south India.

Since the reign of Bahram V (A.D. 420–39), Arabs began to enjoy swift trade activities in the western parts of the Indian Ocean. Crangnnoore or **Kodungalloor** was considered a crucial centre of Roman trade next to Barukaccha of Gujarat. Both were situated on the western coast of India during the visit of the author of **Periplus**. The Sangam literature affirmed the trade carried out by the Yavanas. **Kollam** was one of the most famous trading centres of the Malabar coast. Trade guilds, mercantile associations and organisational aspects of trade also gained prominence to address the issues associated with professional commercial activities.

Protohistoric to Vedic Periods

Nomadic men wandered to find pasturage for their cattle. In the beginning, commercial activities were limited, but with the enhancement of geographical knowledge, the civilisation marched forward and trade activities began to grow. To overcome the difficulties of long-distance trade routes, caravans became the means to carry merchandise. Traces of several fertile regions have been found in Kot-Diji and Quetta before the commencement of the Indus Valley Culture.

The dock excavated in **Lothal** is one of the oldest man-made docks to receive ships. Both Harappa and Mohenjodaro were commercial cities and many small ports, markets and cities existed to support the commercial activities of those big cities. Evidence of trade activities with India has been found in old Babylonian inscriptions. Three types of boats have been found from the excavations of Lothal. The **other ports** of the Indus Valley Culture included **Todio, Amra and Lakhbawal**. There were specialised groups of artisans. The manufacture of beads was concentrated in Chanhudaro and Lothal.

The main imported items were precious metals, copper and semi-precious stones. **Lapis lazuli** was imported from Afghanistan (Shortughai and Badakhshan province). **Turquoise** was imported from Persia and **Amethyst** from Maharashtra. The main exported items were agricultural products, wheat and oil seeds. Exchanges were carried out through the barter system. In Rig Vedic period, trade was practised on a limited scale and the barter system prevailed. Cows served as a medium of exchange. Trade increased in later Vedic period. Other types of medium of exchange were **Niska, Hiranyapinda and manas**. Later Samhitas affirm that sea trade was carried on by boats. Many technical terms regarding navigation are emphasised in the Rigveda and Vajasaneyi **Samhita**.
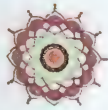
Age of the Mahajanapadas

During this period, when Buddha and Mahavira raised their voices against the Vedic religion, India was divided into sixteen Mahajanapadas and they constantly waged wars against each other. Ajatasatru was very powerful and Magadha became the mightiest empire. Udayibhadra, son of Ajatasatru, laid the foundation of Pataliputra. The city became a great centre of politics, commerce and trade. The reasons behind the constant warfare between different Mahajanapadas were political and economic. We get different depictions of commerce, economic activities, trade routes from Jataka stories, Pali literature and even from the account of Panini. Tanks and wells were available on the sides of roads for the comfort of the travellers. Ferries were available on the rivers. In spite of many difficulties, the caravan leaders carried out long-distance trade inland and abroad. They carried Indian culture and adventurous spirit abroad. Sometimes, Bodhisattva acted as the master of the caravan. Indian merchants interacted with the foreign traders at the sea ports and both sold their articles. Many sea voyages and difficulties of Indian sailors are depicted in the Jataka stories. According to the Jataka, **Bharukachcha** and **Sopara** were chief ports on the western sea coast. **Gambhira** and **Seriva** ports were situated on the eastern coast. Varanasi was famous for silk and the main exported items were cotton textiles. Another crucial item for external and internal trade was **sandalwood**.

Mauryan Period

The well-developed agrarian economy had given a solid economic base to the Mauryan empire. The expansion of commercial economy enabled them to extend its resource base to other parts of the country. The Grand Route of India underwent many changes from the fourth century B.C. to the first century B.C., due to the development of the organisations of the empire.

Organisations associated with Trade and Trade Routes

The **Jataka** stories have mentioned the **caravan** traders carrying large quantities of merchandise to different parts of the country. Security was provided by the Mauryan rule. Many important trade routes to West and Central Asia passed through north-west India. They were along the river Ganges and the Himalayan foothills. Major centres were **Rajagriha** in Magadha and **Kausambi**, near present-day Allahabad. **Pataliputra**, the capital of the Mauryas, was situated in a strategic location and was connected by rivers and roads in all directions. The northern route going through Sravasti and Kapilavastu was connected through Vaisali. The eastern route turned southwards to reach Andhra and Karnataka. The eastern route connected **Tamralipti,** which acted as an exit point for the south and south-east.

From Kausambi, another route led westwards to Ujjain. This route connected to the coast of Gujarat or west south across the Narmada and it was regarded as **Dakshinapatha**.

In north India, craft production was organised primarily on **guild (sreni)** lines. Megasthenes had mentioned a **Superintendent of Commerce**, who is also mentioned in *Arthashastra* as **Panyadhyaksa.** His duty was to fix the prices of goods and to interfere if there was a surplus in any commodity.

The duty of the office of **Samsthadhyaksa** was to check the wrong practices of the traders.

The superintendent of mines was called **Akaradhyaksa** and the officers in charge of agriculture were **Sitadhyaksha**. **Pautavadbyaksa** was Superintendent of weights and measures.

Pataliputra was administered by six Boards, each with five members. They were designated as the **Astynomois. Kahapana/Karshapana** was a widely used coin series (often silver). **Sita** lands were the lands owned/controlled directly by the King.

There was brisk sea trade during the later half of the Mauryan period. Mauryan rulers were also engaged in the shipbuilding business and hired ships for commercial purposes. Goods, ideas, and cultural traits were moved via sea routes. Trade has been the linchpin of prosperity for various Mauryan rulers. **Kautilya** in Arthashastra highlighted how the sea and river routes were cheaper than the land routes. According to Arthashastra, **Dronamukha** was a village where the sea and land trade routes met and the toll was collected.

Haimavatamarga was the route from Balkh to India via Hindukush. It was used for trade in woollen cloths, horses, hides and furs. The *Dakshinapatha* was used for trade in other items like diamond, precious stones and pearls.

Merchandise

According to **Arthashastra**, many precious and semi-precious stones were traded from different places of India and from foreign countries. Kerala coast was also famous for Pearl trade. Sri Lanka was famous for its precious stones. Ruby and Spinal Ruby were imported from Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Burma. The Vindhya Hills and Kerala produced crystal. Sapphire and Amethyst were imported from Sri Lanka. Good quality diamonds came from Sabharashtra (Berar). Coral (Alakandaka) was imported from Alexandria. According to Arthashastra, there was a great demand for aromatics. Many kinds of sandalwood were traded from South India, Java and Sumatra. The horses traded to the middle country came from Kamboja (Tajikistan), Sindh.

Gupta Period

During the Gupta dynasty, industry and trade generally thrived. The decline of Roman trade was the most noteworthy feature of international trade in this period. The Guptas issued a substantial number of gold coins. **Nitisara**, written by Kamandaka, is a treatise on politics and statecraft. It highlighted the importance of the royal treasury and threw light on various sources of revenue.

The **Jambudvipaprajnapti** and the **Mahavastu** in the Gupta period mention various types of guilds. The **Jambudvipaprajnapti** mentions **eighteen traditional guilds** like potter, silk weavers (pattailla), cooks (sūvakara) and singers (gandhabba).

The Guptas issued the largest number of **gold coins. They were called Dinars. There were two distinct types of traders – Sresti** and **Sarthavaha**. Sresti was settled in a specific location.

During the Gupta period, the caravan traders, called **Sarthavaha**, traded merchandise to different places for profit. Trade items included horses, pepper, sandalwood, elephants, gold, iron, etc. Trade was carried out with Ceylon, China and Europe. Trading activities with the Roman Empire declined during Gupta period. South-East Asia became a trade centre for them. Due to the endeavour of the Buddhist monks, Indian culture penetrated to Central Asia and China in the Gupta and post-Gupta period. The accounts of Chinese pilgrims affirm Indian ships sailed to Indonesia and China frequently. These routes were used correspondingly by Buddhist pilgrims and Indian traders. In the middle of the seventh century, the Chinese lost their sway on Central Asia but its relations with India was maintained through the sea-route.
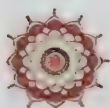
Uttarapatha and Dakshinapatha

Two grand trade routes of Ancient India were Uttarapatha of North and North-west India and Dakshinapatha of Central and South India. Along these trade routes, people, ideas and merchandise moved, and cultural ideas were exchanged. Uttarapatha connected Gandhara (present-day Kandahar, Afghanistan) in the North-west, through Taxila with Lahore, Delhi, Prayag, Varanasi, Nalanda, Pataliputra and ended at the port of Tamralipta in the Bay of Bengal.

Himalayan section of the road was called the Himavatpatha. **Kos Minars** were the milestones. Each Minar marked one Kos (2 miles). Kos Minars dotted the Uttarapatha (particularly along Grand Trunk Road) during Sher Shah Suri's time. Buddhism, at the time, proliferated rapidly via road networks. The Dakshinapatha was the name of southern highway. It originated from Varanasi and connected Ujjaini and Narmada valley to Pratisthana (Paithan) in the Mahajanapada of **Ashmaka**. It also connected roads to the Cholas, Cheras and the Pandyas. Uttarapatha and Dakshinapatha met at **Prayag-Varanasi.**
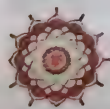
Indo–Roman Trade

Indo–Roman trade started through the caravan routes via Asia Minor and the Middle East, via the Red Sea around 30 BCE during the reign of **Augustus** and his conquest of Egypt.

According to the ancient Greek and Latin texts, the links between Red Sea and India existed from early times and they flourished from the 1st century BC. Tamil Sangam literature, Prakrit inscriptions, and ample numismatics come up with sufficient evidence of this trade.

Roman demand for pepper, spices, pearls, semi-precious stones and textiles increased. They were imported from South Asia and exchanged for high value coins.

A comprehensive discussion on ancient Indo-Roman trade is available in Strabo's '**Geographica**', the **Periplus Maris Erythraei**, Pliny's '**Naturalis Historia**', the **Periplus of the Erythraean Sea**, and Ptolemy's **Geography** (2nd century AD).

There is also evidence of animal trade between Indian harbours and the **Mediterranean** ports.

The Roman ports associated with eastern trade were **Arsinoe**, **Berenice**, **Myos Hormos,** etc. Many Roman traders started their voyage from Berenice and this port was famous for trade with Egypt in the first c. CE.

The regional ports involved with Roman trade were **Barbaricum (Karachi)**, **Sounagoura**, **Barygaza (present-day Bharuch in Gujarat)**, **Muziris**, **Kaveripattinam** and **Arikamedu (Tamil Nadu).**

Muziris, on the south-western coast of India, was a major trade centre between the Chera kingdom and the Roman Empire. Large hoards of coins and numerous shards of **amphorae** have been found in the town of **Pattanam**. The **Periplus Maris Erythraei** refers to a marketplace named **Poduke** which has been identified as possibly **Arikamedu** in **Tamil Nadu.** It was a centre of **early Chola** trade.

Indo-Roman trade declined from the mid-3rd century due to *a crisis in the Roman Empire*. The sea route from Rome to India was closed down. In India, Huna invasions in the second half of the 5th century CE damaged India's trade with **Europe** and **Central Asia**. The **Gupta Empire** benefitted to a great extent from Indo-Roman trade, but the Huna invasions disrupted these trade linkages and they ratcheted down the tax revenues that came with it.
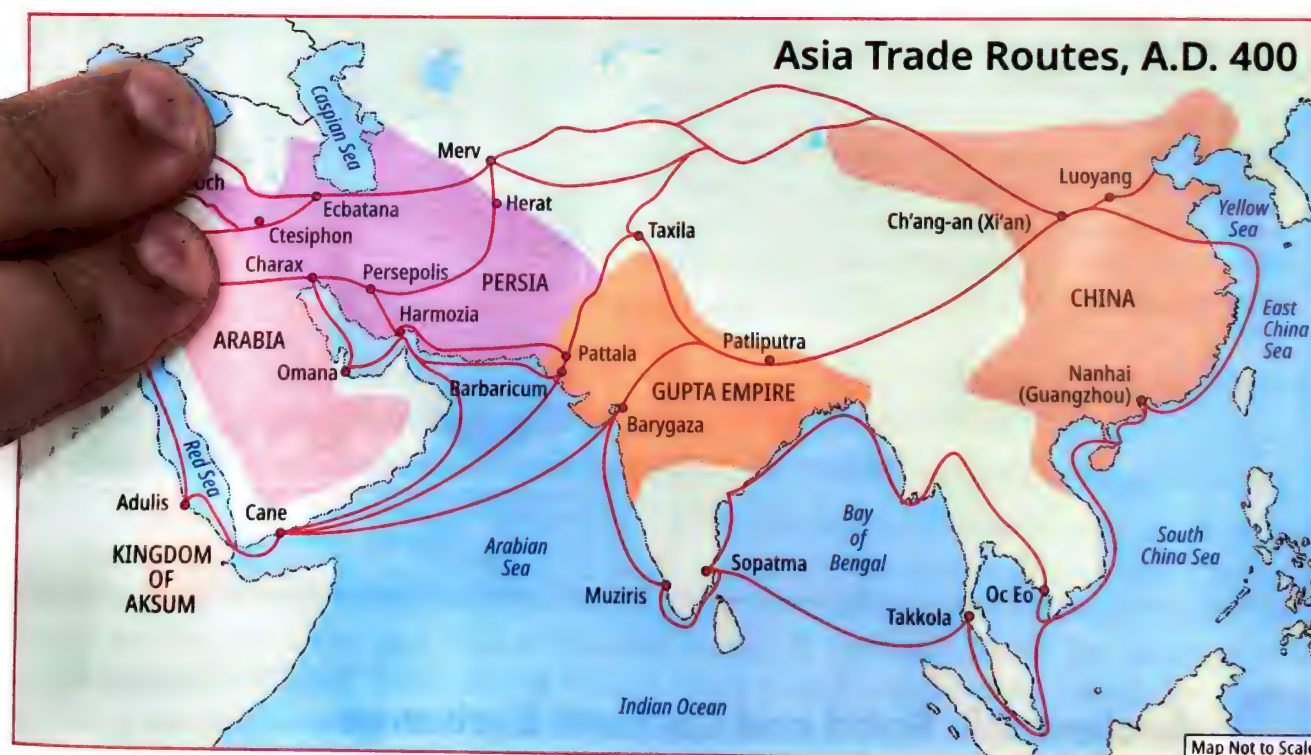
MAP: ASIAN TRADE ROUTES, A.D. 400

After the discovery of the monsoon winds, traders used to build larger ships and there was great improvement in commerce. The pirates of the Konkan and other coasts are mentioned in many sources. The **pepper trade was monopolised by the Cheras** and the pearl trade was carried

on mainly by the **Pandyas**. Black pepper found an important place in the trade between India and Rome. According to Sangam literature, the Greek merchants bought black pepper for gold. The Romans imported tortoise-shell of Indian Ocean and chaplets made in India. Trade items exported from Rome to India were glassware, lamps, corals and wine. India exported to Rome ginger, cardamom, different kinds of woods like teak for making ships, sandalwood, ebony, black wood and rose wood for making furniture.

Muziris Papyrus

The Muziris Papyrus used to be a loan agreement signed between a financier from Alexandria and a merchant for an expedition to Muziris. It is a crucial 'primary document' which records Kerala's maritime, cultural linkages in the 2nd century AD.

Tabula Peutingeriana or Peutinger Table

It was an ancient Roman road map (4th c. AD) or illustrated road network of the Roman Empire.

Poompuhar

Poompuhar, *also known as Kaveripoompattinam, has references in the Tamil epic Manimekalai. It had seaborne commercial links with south-east Asia and Egypt. According to S.M. Ramasamy, "A major finding, based on a study of the past sea levels, is that Poompuhar is not just 2,500 years old as believed widely and might be more than 15,000 years old. It might be one of the oldest port cities in the world."*
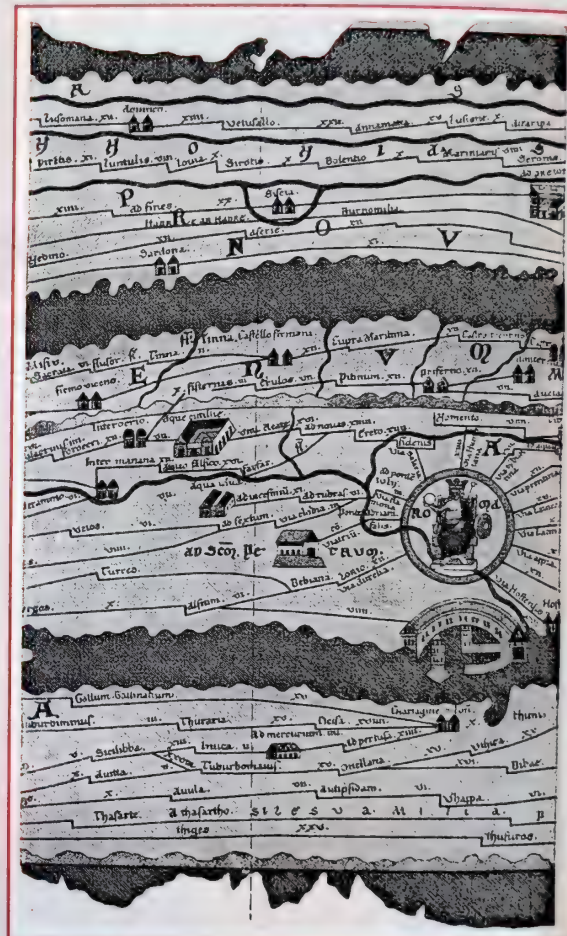
Tabula Peutingeriana

Ancient Silk Road and Cultural Exchange

The ancient Silk Road was a network of trade routes that was active from the 2nd century BC to the mid-15th century. It connected Indian subcontinent, China, Central Asia, and the Mediterranean. The ships also sailed directly following the annual trade winds across the Indian Ocean.

The name Silk Road came from the lucrative trade of silk or textiles that were fabricated almost exclusively in China. The road network began with the **Han dynasty's** extension into **Central Asia** around 114 BCE.

These routes were crucial for the trade of textiles, spices, precious and semi-precious stones, and other luxury items that were highly valued in the ancient world.


The Silk Road

In India, the ancient Silk Road covered mainly Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Punjab, Maharashtra, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

There are **12 main silk road sites** on the tentative list of **UNESCO** World Heritage Sites –

Ruins of Ancient Vaishali (Bihar), Remains of Vikramshila Ancient University (Bihar), Buddhist remains of Kushinagar (UP), Sravasti (UP), Kaushambi (UP), Ahichhatra (UP), Ancient Site and Buddhist Stupa (Punjab), Arikamedu (Puducherry), Excavated Remains of Kaveripattinam (Tamil Nadu), Ancient monastery and stupa at Harwan (Jammu & Kashmir), Burud Kot (Maharashtra) and Indraprastha (Delhi). These sites of the silk route played a noteworthy role in the cultural exchange, and facilitated the exchange of ideas, customs, traits, religions, and artistic **techniques**. Buddhism, for instance, spread to Central Asia and China through the silk route.

Ladakh was a central point on the silk route between India and Central Asia. This region was an important centre for Buddhism and many Buddhist monasteries and cultural sites are situated in Ladakh that were connected to the silk route.
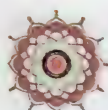
Ruins of Ancient Vaishali

Kolhua: Remains of *Kutagarshala, Swastika* – shaped monastery, cluster of votive stupas, miniature shrines, etc. have been unearthed in Kolhua. The main components of structure and the antiquities belonged to the Maurya and post-Gupta periods.

Buddhist Remains of Kushinagar

The site comprises the Main Stupa and Nirvana temple with other surrounding monuments, the Shrine called *Matha-Kuar*.

The Matha-Kuar Shrine: A colossal statue of Buddha, locally called *Matha-Kuar, is installed in Kushinagar.* It is made up of blue stone.

Arikamedu

Arikamedu is mentioned as Poduke in the Periplus maris Erythraei. The site of Arikamedu provides ample evidence of the export of a variety of Indian objects like glass beads, shell, terracotta objects and muslin cloths. A large number of Mediterranean amphora jars, Rouletted ware and terra sigillata have been unearthed in Arikamedu. **According to UNESCO, "Arikamedu is the only site in India that has yielded pottery with inscriptions in at least four different languages – Prakrit, Tamil, Old Sinhalese and Latin."**

Trade and Indian Art

Several aspects of trade, boats, voyages, caravans and modes of travelling are depicted in ancient Indian art, sculpture and painting. Boats have been represented on the potsherds and seals of the Indus Valley Civilisation. Ship has also been represented in **Bharhut bas-relief**. Representations of boats have been found in **bas-relief of Sanchi and Amaravati**. Ship has also been found in terracotta seal of the Gupta period. In cave XVII of **Ajanta cave**, a voyage to Sri Lanka has been represented. A ship is represented and a bow and stern of the ship are raked in cave II in Ajanta. Markets, shops and storage places have been represented in Bharhut reliefs. Representations of bullock carts and contemporary vehicles appeared in **bas-reliefs of Mathura, Goli**.

Trade and Commerce under the Delhi Sultanate

Before the coming of the Sultanate empire, the urban economy was on a low ebb. Towns were fewer in number and smaller in size. But, this scenario changed rapidly with the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. The archaeological and numismatic evidence endorses the growth of towns

and trade activities. Muhammad Habib had postulated the theory of 'Urban Revolution' which indicated this resurgence.

Most of the 13th century towns were **iqta** headquarters. The revenue was collected in cash from the peasants and they were forced to sell their produce at the side of the field. The urban craft manufacturing got an impetus with the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. Urban manufacturers received new technological devices that reached India with the invaders. The Bengal ports had commercial relations with China and Malacca. Bengal imported salt from Hormuz and sea-shells from the **Maldivian** Archipelago. Sindh had a well-known port – **Daibul**. It had strong trade relations with the Persian Gulf ports. The Khalji annexation of Gujarat amplified trade activities between the Delhi Sultanate and the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea because Gujarat was connected with both the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea.

Sindh, Gujarat, Malabar, Coromandel and Bengal coasts furnished opportunities for exchange of regional products. **Multan** was a significant trading centre for overland trade. India was connected to Afghanistan, Persia and Central Asia through the **Multan-Quetta route.**

The major items of import were horses, gold, silver, etc. Brocade and silk were imported from Alexandria, China and Iraq. The Sultanate primarily exported textiles and grain. The Persian Gulf regions heavily depended on India for their staple food supply. Slaves were exported to Central Asia and Indigo to Persia.

Two types of Commercial Classes are mentioned in different sources during the reign of the Delhi Sultanate: the **Karwanis** (or Nayaks) and **Multanis**. The **Karwanis** used to carry grains and moved together in large numbers. The other group of merchants was the Multanis. They were rich and engaged in usury (**loan-sharking**) and commerce. The **Sarrafs** were another mercantile group. They tested the metallic purity of the indigenous and foreign coins and set up the exchange-ratio. The Sarrafs issued **bills of exchange** or **Hundi**.

Mughal Trade

The Mughals built their empire augmenting its production capacity and using India's resources. They developed a trade system in the Indian Ocean. Potent trade relations between Western Europe and the Mughal empire started from the beginning of the 17th century. The Mughal trade in India was implemented mainly on the coast. Standard coins and fixed weights were issued and they facilitated trade and commerce. Several new cities were established and these cities became centres of trade and commercial activities. Before the advent of the Europeans, the main buyers of Indian cotton textiles were the Mughals, Khorasanis and Iraqis. They exported them to Central Asia and Persia. The main **types of Indian cotton fabrics** were **Samanis, Calico, Khairabadi, Dariabadi and Amberty**. Printed cotton textiles (**Chintz**) were the most favourite item of export. **Saltpetre** was one of the major ingredients for making gunpowder that was much in demand in Europe in the 17th century. Bihar was the most important supplier of it.

Indigo for blue dye was produced in northern India. Prior to the supply to Europe, large volume of Indigo was exported to the Persian Gulf from Gujarat.

Some of the inland caravan routes were Agra to Delhi route connected to Kabul, Burhanpur to Agra connected to Surat, and Agra to Patna route connected to Bengal. The most frequented overland caravan commercial route during the Medieval period was the great Silk Road. Mughal India developed a large shipbuilding industry, which was centred in the Bengal province. Akbar played a key role in developing Bengal as a prosperous province.

Putabhedana

Putabhedana was the centre of trade in ancient India. It refers to a city where all kinds of wares are weighed and interchanged. The term literally means a commercial centre where traders used to break (bhedana) the lid or seal (puta) of their merchandise. The term is mentioned in the depiction of commerce at a pentha in **Yasastilakacampu** *written by Somadeva Suri and several other texts. The term is also mentioned in* **Mahaparinivvanasuttanta** *of Vinayapitaka.*

Rajasresthi

In early Indian society, sresthi was usually a merchant of immense wealth. Rajasresthi was the royal merchant who was closely associated with the king. During the Mauryan empire, royal goods were traded through different channels under certain conditions. Sresthi underwent a significant change under the Mauryan empire. Several rajasresthis were associated with the Chola and Hoysala court.

Some Significant Terms Associated with Shipping

* **Pravahana** – coastal craft
* **Vahitra** and **Yanapatra** – sea-going vessel
* **Niyamaka** – captain of vessel
* **Kupastambha** – mast
* **Nauvittaka** – ship owning merchant

The text **Yuktikalpataru** of Bhoja narrated four kinds of vessels made of four types of woods for Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra.

Mandapikas

In early Medieval India, mandapikas have been mentioned in several epigraphic records as wholesale markets, exchange centres and centres of commercial toll collection. They were situated in major urban commercial centres like Bilhari and Siyadoni.

The mandapikas are mentioned in the **Bayana inscription** *of Bharatpur.*

The Lekhapaddhati documents enlisted different officers for revenue collection at mandapikas:

* **Mandavi** – *officer in charge*
* **Pathakias** – *collected record cess*
* **Uparihindiyas** – *tax inspectors*

Pentha

Pentha was the centre of trade in ancient Deccan (600–1300 AD). In many kingdoms, pentha has been described as a centre/unit of local administration. The existence of pentha has also been found in central and western India. According to Somadeva Suri, pentha also generated tolls and customs.
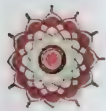
Trade Activities in Ancient Bengal

There were considerable commercial activities in Vanga (central deltaic Bengal) and Samatata (Chittagong, Comilla, etc. of Bangladesh) regions of ancient Bengal. Flourishing agrarian economy is highlighted in many Kharosthi-Brahmi inscriptions. Cotton garments and textile were extremely important products in this region. Horses were exported from Bengal by trappaga types of ships. Other commercial products included spices and Gangetic muslin. **Chandraketugarh**, situated on the banks of the river Vidyadhari, was a major port for coastal and long-distance trade. The ancient port Tamralipta was bounded by the Bay of Bengal in the south, river Rupnarayana in the east and river Subarnarekha in the west. The Sanskrit word Tamra Lipta means 'Full of Copper'. Xuanzang visited Tamralipta in 639 AD. Ancient Bengal coast had trade activities and regular contact with the Roman traders. **Sambhandariyaka** was the place where items were stored or warehousing facilities were available. **Nauvataka** was the head of the royal navy and ardhanauvataka was an officer junior to nauvataka. In **Dasakumaracarita** of Dandin, sea-going vessels from Tamralipta are mentioned. There are frequent references of the coconut as a product in the medieval inscriptions of Bengal.

Maritime Trade in Ancient Gujarat

Several factors like long coastline, ports and famed textile products created favourable conditions for coastal, riverine, inland and overland trade activities in ancient Gujarat. Ancient Gujarat was also famous for some commercial crops. The Lothal port flourished during the Harappan civilisation. **Bharukachcha port** was prosperous during the Kshatrapa era. It was a gateway for trade through both land and waters. Greek and Latin texts mention trade activities between the Roman empire and the Bharukachcha port. During the 3rd century BC to 4th century AD, several **ports** existed along the coastline of Gujarat like **Nani Rayan, Dwarka, Vallabhi and Hathab**. According to the Lekhapaddhati, the use of Hundi was widespread in Gujarat and the bill of exchange had to be encashed within 15 days from the date of issuance. The **raja-hundika** or royal bill of exchange is also mentioned in Lekhapaddhati. Hundi emerged as an alternative mode of monetary transaction.
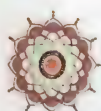
Prominent Ancient Ports of India

The naval trade with various countries during the ancient and medieval times played a great role in the spread of Indian culture abroad. The detailed account of the ports in ancient India can be found from the books *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* and *Geographia*. During Mauryan rule, the **Navadhyaksha**, i.e., Superintendent of Shipping, used to look after the shipping administration. The **coins** of the last Satavahana King **Yajna Sri Satakarni** contained the **figure of ships**, probably indicating the naval strength of the dynasty. Let us now look at an illustrative list of prominent ports in ancient times.

| Name of the Port	Region	Associated Dynasty and the Time Period	Brief Details
Lothal	Gujarat (near present day Ahmedabad)	Indus Valley Civilisation; 2400 BC	Export of copper, hardwoods, ivory, pearls, carnelian and gold to Mesopotamia and timber wood and lapis lazuli to Sumeria
Barygaza	Present day Bharuch in Gujarat	3rd century BC onwards: Major trade centre of Roman trade under Western Satraps	Spice and silk trade with Arab countries. Plundered twice in the 17th century but resurged quickly. Import of wheat, rice, sesame oil, cotton and cloth
Muziris	Malabar Coast, Kerala (near present-day Kochi)	1st century BC onwards: Chera Kingdom	Mentioned in Sangam Literature. Export of spices, semi-precious stones such as beryl, pearls, diamonds, sapphires, ivory, Chinese silk, Gangetic spikenard and tortoise shells to Persia, Rome, Greece and Egypt
Korkai	Tamil Nadu	Early Pandyan kingdom	Well-known centre of pearl fishery and finds mention in Sangam Literature
Puhar (also known as Kaveri Poompattinam)	Tamil Nadu (at the mouth of Cauveri river)	Early Chola dynasty; 400 BC– 200 AD	Import of various articles. Mentioned in *Silappadikaram*
Podouke	Present-day Arikamedu near Puducherry	2nd century BC– 8th century AD	Greek trading port to trade with Rome. Items of export included gems, pearls, spices and silk. Import of wine was prevalent.
Barbarikon	Near Karachi, Pakistan	Parthians and Scythians	Import of linens, topaz, coral, storax, frankincense, vessels of glass, silver and gold plate and wine. Exports included turquoise, lapis lazuli, Seric skins, cotton cloth, silk yarn and indigo.
Sounagora	Wari (Bateshwar in present-day Bangladesh)	450–300 BC; Mauryan Dynasty	Mathematician Ptolemy mentioned about Sounagora in his book *Geographia*.
Maisolia or Masulipatnam	Machilipatnam, Andhra Pradesh	From the 3rd century BC onwards during Satavahana's reign	Muslin clothes were traded by ancient Greeks. Principal sea port of the **Golconda Kingdom** from the 15th to 17th centuries.

Name of the Port	Region	Associated Dynasty and the Time Period	Brief Details
Tamralipti	Present-day Tamluk, West Bengal	Mauryan dynasty	Exit point of the Mauryan trade route for the South and south-east. Dudhpani rock inscription of Udaymana of the 8th century AD contains the last record of Tamralipti as a port of ancient South Asia. Greek geographer Ptolemy mentioned about Tamralipti in his book *Geographia*. Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang calls the town Tan-mo-lih-ti. It was visited by Xuanzang (Hiuen Tsang) in 639 AD. Fa-Hien stayed here for two years.
Palur	Ganjam district of Odisha	2nd century AD; Kalinga dynasty	Place of voyage to South-East Asia and China and trade of pottery. It was mentioned by Ptolemy and Xuanzang (Hiuen Tsang) in the 2nd and 7th century AD, respectively.

PTER SUMMARY

- Ancient Indian texts **Mahaniddesa** and **Arthashastra** inform about commercial activities.
- **Crangnnoore or Kodungalloor** – crucial centre of Roman trade next to Barukaccha of Gujarat.
- Many technical terms regarding navigation are highlighted in the **Rigveda** and **Vajasaneyi Samhita.**
- Trade increased in later Vedic period. Other types of medium of exchange were **Niska, Hiranyapinda** and **manas.**
- Megasthenes – mentioned a **superintendent of commerce, who** is also mentioned in the Arthashastra as **Panyadhyaksa.**
- **Nitisara** – written by Kamandaka – a treatise on politics and statecraft.
- According to Arthashastra, **Dronamukha** was a village where the sea and land trade **routes** met and toll was collected.
- **The Guptas** issued the largest number of **gold coins – Dinars.**
- Two distinct types of traders in Gupta period were **Sresti and Sarthavaha.**
- **Sresti** was settled in a specific location.
- During the Gupta period, the caravan traders were called **Sarthavaha.**
- The **Uttarapatha and Dakshinapatha** met at **Prayag-Varanasi.**
- **Arikamedu** is mentioned as Poduke in the *Periplus maris Erythraei.*
- There are **12 main silk road sites** on the tentative list of **UNESCO** World Heritage Sites.
- **The Matha-Kuar Shrine is** a colossal statue of Buddha – locally called *Matha-Kuar, it is installed in Kushinagar* – made of blue stone.
- According to the **Lekhapaddhati,** the use of Hundi was widespread in Gujarat and the bill of exchange had to be encashed within 15 days from the date of issuance.
- **Sambhandariyaka** was the place where items were stored or warehousing facilities were available in ancient Bengal.

16

CHAPTER

LANGUAGES IN INDIA
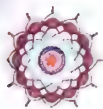
Introduction

The writings, during the entire era of history have reflected the culture, lifestyle and polity of the contemporary society. In this process, each culture evolved its own language and created a huge literary base. This enormous base of literature provides us a glimpse of the evolution of each of its languages and culture through the span of centuries.

To access online video related to this chapter, scan this QR code

Language, in its *literary meaning*, is a system of communication through speech, a collection of sounds that a group of people understand to have the same meaning.

- **A language family** *includes individual languages related through a common ancestor that existed before the recorded history.*
- **Dialect** *is a form of language spoken in a local area. It is noteworthy that several dialects can be derived from a particular language. Braj, Awadhi, Haryanvi, etc. are all dialects of the Hindi language.*

The languages spoken around the various corners of India belong to several language families, where most of them belong to the *Indo-Aryan group* of languages. This Indo-Aryan group was born out of the Indo-European family. However, there are some language groups which are indigenous to the Indian subcontinent.
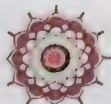
Classification of Indian Languages

Languages in India are classified into the following major sub-groups:

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                        Indian
                       Languages
   ┌──────────┬──────────┬──────────┬──────────┬──────────┐
Indo-Aryan  Dravidian  Sino-Tibetian  Negroid   Austric    Others
 Group       Group       Group        Group      Group
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Indo-Aryan Group of Languages

It is a branch of the larger Indo-European family (*the Indo-European languages are a language family native to the overwhelming majority of Europe, the Iranian plateau and the northern Indian subcontinent*). It is the largest language group of India, and around **74 percent** of the Indians speak languages belonging to this group. This language group is further divided into *three sub-groups* depending upon the *time period* of their origin.

Old Indo-Aryan Group

This group had its development around **1500 BC** and **Sanskrit** was born out of this group. The ancient form of Sanskrit is what is found in the Vedas. Even the Upanishads, Puranas and Dharmasutras were all written in Sanskrit. It can be said that **Sanskrit is the mother of many Indian languages**. An understanding of the diversity and richness of our culture has been made possible because of the development of the Sanskrit language during those times. It is the **most ancient language** of India and **one of the 22 Scheduled Languages** listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

Classical Sanskrit as a Vehicle of Indian Culture

The development of Sanskrit grammar began with *Panini* in **400 BC** with his book **Asthadhyayi,** being the oldest book in Sanskrit grammar. Some of the Buddhist literature belonging to the Mahayana and the Hinayana schools are even written in Sanskrit language. The book **Mahavastu** of the Hinayana school is a treasure trove of stories and written in a mix of Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit. **Lalitavistara Sūtra**, the most sacred Mahayana text, and Ashvagosha's **Buddhacharita** were also written in Sanskrit.

Sanskrit is the only language that transcended the barriers of regions and boundaries. From the north to the south and from the east to the west, there is no region in India that has not contributed to or has not been affected by the Sanskrit language. The various literatures in the Sanskrit language have been discussed in the chapter on literature.

The chaste form of Sanskrit developed between 300 and 200 BC and was a refined version of Vedic Sanskrit. **One of the earliest pieces of evidence** of the use of Sanskrit can be found in the rock inscriptions of *Rudradaman I at Junagarh* (also known as the **Girnar Rock inscription**) in the present-day southern Gujarat region and is dated around 150 AD.

In South India, the **Chebrolu inscription** (in Andhra Pradesh) of Satavahana King Vijaya (issued in 207 AD) is also the earliest datable Sanskrit inscription from South India so far. It was discovered in 2019.

However, it was the Gupta period during which the use of Sanskrit in poetry can be traced back to. This was completely a period of creation of pure literature which is evident in the works as *Mahakavyas* (epics) and *Khandakavyas* (semi-epics).

In the field of Sanskrit literature, this period is known as a period of unique creation because of the variety of literary works that developed at the time. Another important aspect of the period is with regard to the ornate style in literary works. Many of the plays developed during the Gupta period were also written in Sanskrit. However, it is to be noted that one of the features of these plays was the **use of the Sanskrit language by the characters of high *varna*** and the **use of the Prakrit language by women and Shudras**.

Middle Indo-Aryan Group

The period of development of this sub-group is between **600 BC and 1000 AD** and it started with the development of **Prakrit language**. Prakrit is understood as being natural, original, and casual, and was used as a common tongue without any strict rules of usage. Prakrit is a **broader term** under which all the Middle Indo-Aryan group of languages are generally clubbed together. Many languages such as **Ardhamagadhi, Pali** *(used by Theravada Buddhists) and* **Apabhramsa** find their origin from Prakrit.

Prakrit was associated with the **common people**. On the other hand, Sanskrit was orthodox, had fixed rules and was used by learned people or the elites, especially Brahmins. The writing of texts in Prakrit was relatively a late development, as compared to Sanskrit.

Prakrit and **Ardhamagadhi** languages were used in the Jain **'Agamas'**.

It is important to note that the period of transition from one language or dialect to another was slow and cannot be separated into strict chronological periods.

Prakrit includes the following:

* **Pali:** It was widely spoken in Magadha. It was popular during the 5th–1st century BC. According to some scholars, Pali originated either in Ujjain or Taxila, but spread across the Vindhyas and into North-Eastern regions. It was closely related to Sanskrit, and the texts in Pali were generally written in the **Brahmi script**. The **Tripitaka of Buddhism were also written in Pali**. It served as the lingua franca of **Theravada Buddhism**. It is believed that Buddha himself did not speak in Pali but delivered his preachings in the **Ardhamagadhi language**.

* **Magadhi Prakrit or Ardhamagadhi:** It is the most important kind of Prakrit. Its literary use increased after the decline of Sanskrit and Pali. **Buddha and Mahavira** perhaps spoke in Ardhamagadhi. It was the court language of a few Mahajanapadas as well as the Mauryan Dynasty. Several Jain texts and the rock edicts of Ashoka were also written in Ardhamagadhi. It later evolved into many languages of eastern India, such as Bengali, Assamese, Odia, Maithili and Bhojpuri.

* **Shauraseni:** It was widely used **to write dramas** in medieval India. It is also referred to as **Dramatic Prakrit**. It was the predecessor to Northern Indian languages. **Jain monks** mainly used this version of Prakrit while writing. The oldest text of the Digambara Jains, the **'Shatkhandgama'** is written in Shauraseni.

* **Maharashtri Prakrit:** This was spoken until the 9th century AD and was the predecessor to Marathi and Konkani. It was used widely in Western and Southern India. It was the **official language of Satavahana Dynasty**. Several dramas were written in this language, such as 'Gaha Kosha' by King Hala and 'Gaudavaho' (slaying of the King of Gauda) by Vakpati.

* **Elu:** It is an ancient form of the **Sinhala Language** of Sri Lanka (it is similar to Pali).

* **Paishachi:** It is also referred to as **'Bhutabhasa'** (dead language). Often regarded as Prakrit, it is considered an unimportant dialect. Gunadhya's **Brihatkatha**, an ancient epic, is written in Paishachi. There is one chapter dedicated to Paisachi Prakrit in **Prakrita Prakasha**, a grammar book on Prakrit language attributed to **Vararuchi**.

Apabhramsa

The development of 'Apabhramsa' (corrupt or non-grammatical) took place in the 6th–7th century AD. Apabhramsa is also an umbrella term used to refer to **dialects other than Sanskrit or even Prakrit**. It represents a transition from the Middle to Modern Indo-Aryan group of languages.

Apabhramsa gradually became a literary language and was used to write several texts, legends, etc. Apabhramsa developed its own identity by the 7th century AD. This can be highlighted by the fact that **Bhamaha**, a renowned poet of Kashmir from the 6th or 7th century AD, divided

poetry into Sanskrit, Prakrit and Apabhramsa. Also, **Dandin** said that Apabhramsa is the dialect of the common folk. Many Jain monks and scholars wrote extensively in Apabhramsa, thereby and sustaining the language.

Major works include Pushpadanta's **Mahapurana** (Digambara Jain text), Dhanapala's **Bhavisayattakaha**, etc.
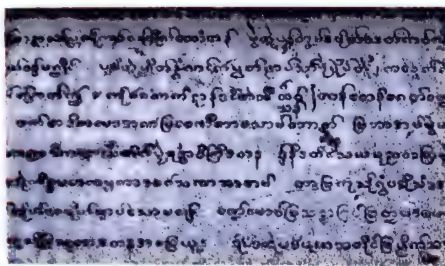
Pali Alphabet
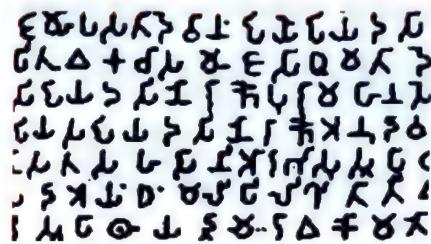
Prakrit Alphabet

Modern Indo-Aryan Group

The languages belonging to this group are *Hindi, Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Sindhi, Odia, Urdu,* etc. The languages under this sub-group developed gradually **after 1000 AD**. These languages are mainly spoken in the northern, western and the eastern parts of India.

Romani *is an Indo-Aryan language that is part of the Balkan sprachbund. It is the only New Indo-Aryan language spoken exclusively outside the Indian sub-continent.*

Bengali Language Movement

After the birth of Pakistan, in early 1948, Bengalis found that the money order form which was used for sending money through the post office included only Urdu language and excluded Bangla. This led to the start of Bengali language movement in **East Pakistan**.

The demand for Bangla as one of the national languages (along with Urdu) was raised first by **Dhirendranath Datta** from East Pakistan in 1948, in the constituent Assembly of Pakistan. On 21 February 1952, police opened fire on rallies where people sacrificed their lives for the mother tongue. After years of conflict, the Central Government granted official status to Bengali language in 1956.

UNESCO, in 1999, announced **21st February** as **International Mother Language Day**, in order to promote awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and to promote multilingualism. The day was formally recognised by UN in 2002. The UN also established **2008** as the **International Year of Languages**.

Dravidian Group

This group mainly comprises the languages spoken in the southern part of India. Around **25 percent** of the Indian population is covered under this group. Proto Dravidian gave rise to 21 Dravidian languages. According to some scholars, Dravidian emerged from Prakrit and Paisacha languages. They also got blended with Negrito languages. The Dravidian group can be broadly classified into *three groups*: Northern group, Central group and Southern group:

Northern Group

It consists of *three languages*, i.e., **Brahui**, **Malto** and **Kurukh**. Brahui is spoken in Baluchistan, Malto in the tribal areas of Bengal and Odisha, while Kurukh is spoken in Bengal, Odisha, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

Central Group

It consists of *eleven languages*, i.e., Gondi, Khond, Kui, Manda, Parji, Gadaba, Kolami, Pengo, Naiki, Kuvi and **Telugu**. Only Telugu became a civilised language and is spoken in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana whereas the others are tribal languages.

Southern Group

Seven languages belong to this group; **Kannada**, **Tamil**, **Malayalam**, Tulu, Kodagu, Toda and Kota. **Tamil** is the *oldest* among them.

Among these 21 languages of the Dravidian group, the **four major languages** are as follows:

* **Telugu** (numerically the largest of all Dravidian languages)
* **Tamil** (oldest and purest form of language)
* **Kannada**
* **Malayalam** (smallest and the youngest of the Dravidian group).

Tulu Language

Tulu *is a Dravidian language, mainly spoken in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi of Karnataka and in the northern parts of the Kasaragod district of Kerala. The native speakers of Tulu are referred to as Tuluva or Tulu people and the geographical area is unofficially called Tulu Nadu.*

As per the Census of 2011, there are around 1.8 million Tulu speakers in India. Hence, efforts are being made to include Tulu in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution and to impart the official language status to it in Karnataka and Kerala.

Tulu is known for its oral literature in the form of epic poems called **pardana** *and traditional folk theatre* **Yakshagana***.*

Sino-Tibetan Group

Languages under this group belong to the Mongoloid family and stretch to all over the Himalayas, North Bihar, North Bengal, Assam and up to the North-Eastern frontiers of India. These languages are considered to be older than the Indo-Aryan Languages and are referred to as *Kiratas* in the oldest Sanskrit literature. Languages belonging to this group are spoken by **0.6 percent** of the Indian population.

The Sino-Tibetan Group is further divided into the following:

Tibeto–Burman   Siamese–Chinese
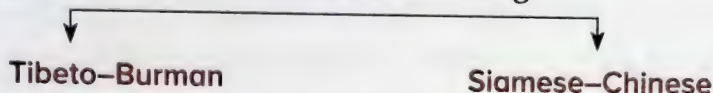
Tibeto-Burman

Languages under the Tibeto-Burman group are further divided into *four* groups:

(a) *Tibetan*: Sikkimese, Bhutia, Balti, Sherpa, Lahuli and Ladakhi
(b) *Himalayan*: Kinnauri and Limbu
(c) *North Assam*: Abor, Miri, Aka, Dafla and Mishmi
(d) Kuki, Garo, Bodo, Mikir, Naga, etc. *Meitei* is the most important language spoken under this sub-group and is mainly spoken in Manipur.

Siamese-Chinese

Ahom is one of the languages which belong to this group. However, this language is already *extinct* in the Indian sub-continent.

Austric

Languages under this group belong to the *Austro-Asiatic* sub-family which is represented by the languages of the **Munda or Kol group** and are spoken in Central, Eastern and North-Eastern India. Some of them also belong to the **Mon-Khmer Group**, viz. **Khasi** and **Nicobarese**.

These languages have been in existence much before the advent of the Aryans and thus these were referred to as the **Nisadas** in ancient Sanskrit literature.

Santhali is the most important language under this group and is spoken by Santhal tribals of Jharkhand, Bihar and Bengal.

With the exceptions of **Khasi** and **Santhali**, all the Austro-Asiatic languages in Indian territory are *endangered*.

Others

This group includes several Dravidian tribal languages such as Gondi, Oraon, Praji, which are very distinct and cannot be classified in the groups mentioned above.

Differences between the **Indo-Aryan group** and the **Dravidian group** of languages are as follows:

1. The **root words** in the two language families are different.
2. There is a different grammatical structure in the two groups:
   (a) The grammatical structure of the Dravidian Family is **agglutinative**, i.e., the combinations in which root words are united results in little or no change of form or loss of words.
   (b) The grammatical structure of the Indo-Aryan Group is **inflected**, i.e., a word's ending or its spelling changes according to its grammatical function in a sentence.
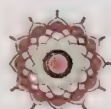
Official Languages of India

Article 343 (1) of the Constitution of India states that 'The official language of the Union Government shall be **Hindi in Devanagari Script**.' Unless Parliament decided otherwise, the use of English for official purposes was to cease 15 years after the Constitution came into effect, i.e., on 26 January 1965. This means that over a period of 15 years from the commencement of the Indian Constitution, Hindi will replace English as the official language. Parliament can decide if English can be used as the official language.

This clause led to **protests** across the nation by the non-Hindi-speaking communities against the change in the official language from English to Hindi.

The protest resulted in the enactment of **The Official Languages Act, 1963**. This Act declares **Hindi in Devanagari script** as the official language of the Union. **English** has been given the status of **'subsidiary official language'** of the Union.

The Constitution of India has also made a provision for each of the Indian States to choose its own official language for communications at the State level. There are many languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution which may be used by the States for official purposes. **Initially**, the following *fourteen languages* were selected under the Eighth Schedule.

- Assamese
- Bengali
- Gujarati
- Hindi
- Kannada
- Kashmiri
- Malayalam
- Marathi
- Odia
- Punjabi
- Sanskrit
- Tamil
- Telugu
- Urdu

* Later, **Sindhi** was added as the 15th language through the *21st Amendment Act of 1967*.

* *Three* more languages were added by the *71st Amendment Act, 1992*. They are **Konkani, Manipuri** and **Nepali**.

* The *92nd Amendment Act, 2003*, added *four* more languages to the Eighth Schedule. They are **Bodo, Maithili, Dogri** and **Santhali**.

Thus, at present, there are **22 languages** in total listed under the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

> **Note:**
>
> - *There is* **no national language** *of India. Hindi is not a national language. Neither the Constitution nor any Act defines the word 'national language'.*
> - *The Constitution does not specify an official language for the States for conduct of their official functions.* **States are free to adopt an official language**.
> - *The language to be adopted by the States need* **not** *be one of those listed in the Eighth Schedule. Several States have adopted an official language which is not listed in the Eighth Schedule.*
>   *Examples:*
>   ❖ *Tripura – Kokborok (belonging to Sino-Tibetan Family)*
>   ❖ *Puducherry – French*
>   ❖ *Mizoram – Mizo*
> - **English is not in the list of 22 scheduled languages** *as per the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.*
> - **Arunachal Pradesh** *and* **Nagaland** *are the only states which have* **English** *as their* **only** *official language.*

Status of Classical Language

In 2004, the Government of India declared that languages that meet certain requirements would be accorded the status of a 'Classical Language of India'.

Criteria

The following **criteria** were laid down to determine the eligibility of languages to be considered for classification as a *'Classical Language'*:

1. High antiquity of its early texts/recorded history over a period of 1500–2000 years;
2. A body of ancient literature/texts, which is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers;
3. The literary tradition to be original and not borrowed from another speech community;
4. The classical language and literature must be distinct from modern, there may also be a discontinuity between the classical language and its later forms or its offshoots.

Languages so far **declared** to be a Classical Language are the following:

- **Tamil** (2004)
- **Sanskrit** (2005)
- **Telugu** (2008)
- **Kannada** (2008)
- **Malayalam** (2013)
- **Odia** (2014)

The Government has been criticised for not including **Pali** as a classical language as experts argue that it fits all the above-mentioned criteria. A proposal for granting classical status to **Marathi language** is under the consideration of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

Benefits

The Government of India's resolution states that the following *benefits* will accrue to a language declared as a 'Classical Language':

- Two major international awards for scholars of eminence in a Classical Indian Languages to be awarded annually.
- A 'Centre of Excellence for Studies in the Classical Language' will be set up.
- The University Grants Commission will be requested to create and to start with, at least in the Central Universities, a certain number of Professional Chairs in Classical Languages for scholars of eminence.

The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** emphasises on the study of Classical Languages in Schools, as an **Additional Option**. As per NEP, 'In addition to Sanskrit, the teaching of all other classical languages and literature of India, including Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Pali, Persian, and Prakrit, will also be widely available in schools as options.'

National Translation Mission

The National Translation Mission (NTM) is a Government of India scheme to facilitate higher education by making knowledge texts accessible to students and academies in Indian languages. The NTM aims to *disseminate knowledge in all 22 languages listed* in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution through translation.

A combination of efforts is made to orient translators, encourage publishers to publish translations, maintain databases of published translations from, into and between Indian languages and to become a clearinghouse of information on translation to establish translation as an industry in India. It is expected to facilitate the modernisation of languages by developing new terminologies and discourse styles through translation. At present, the NTM is engaged in the translation of all pedagogic material related to higher education in **22 Indian languages**.

Lingua Franca

A *lingua franca*, also known as a **bridge language**, common language, trade language or vehicular language, is a language or dialect systematically used to make communication possible between persons **not sharing a native language or dialect**, in particular when it is a **third language**, distinct from both native languages.

Lingua francae has been developed around the world throughout human history, sometimes for commercial reasons but also for cultural, religious, diplomatic and administrative convenience, and as a means of exchanging information between scientists and other scholars of different nationalities. The best example is **English** in present time. Latin was Lingua Franca of Roman empire.

Death of a Language

After the 1971 Census, the Indian government had stated that any indigenous language that is spoken by less than 10,000 people would no longer be considered in the List of Official Languages of India. According to UNESCO, any language spoken by less than 10,000 people is potentially endangered.

Most dying languages are from the indigenous tribal groups spread across the country. A few of them are the languages spoken by the nomadic people in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Telangana.

The Critically Endangered and Extinct Languages of India

When a language is left with no speaker and the usage is stopped, it leads to a socio-cultural loss. Language loss has been a reality throughout history. The native speakers of a language keep migrating from their language to another as per social and economical needs. In this migration, if they stop using their native language altogether, then, in the intergenerational period, language death and language extinction occur.

UNESCO has been releasing an **Atlas of the World Languages in Danger** since 1996 to identify the languages in danger and to preserve the languages from being extinct.

The **World Atlas of Languages (WAL)** is an interactive and dynamic online tool that documents different aspects and features of language status in countries and languages around the world. It aims to provide a detailed record of languages as communicative tools and knowledge resources in their socio-cultural and socio-political contexts.

The UNESCO World Atlas has 4 levels of endangerment, between **'Safe'** (not endangered) and **'Extinct'**, which are as follows:

1. Vulnerable, 2. Definitely Endangered, 3. Severely Endangered, and 4. Critically Endangered.

As per WAL, **India has 197 languages** – which are endangered, vulnerable or extinct in this list. Among these, 5 languages are extinct, 42 are critically endangered, 7 are

severely endangered, 62 are definitely endangered and 81 are vulnerable. This is the highest number of languages in danger for any country in the world.

The five extinct languages of India are the languages of the Himalayan belt. They are as follows:

1. **Ahom** language or Tai-Ahom language (North-East Indian Subcontinent),
2. **Andro** (Sino-Tibetan language of Manipur),
3. **Rangkas** (Sino-Tibetan language of Uttarakhand),
4. **Sengmai** (Sino-Tibetan language of Manipur), and
5. **Tolcha** (Tibeto-Burman language of Uttarakhand).

More than half of the endangered languages have fewer than 10,000 speakers and therefore have not been recorded in the Indian Census.

The United Nations (UN) proclaimed **2019** as the *International Year of Indigenous Languages*. Later, 2022–2032 has been proclaimed as the *International Decade of Indigenous Languages* by UN.

Out of 191 languages of India that are classified as vulnerable or endangered, following **42 are the Critically Endangered Languages** as per UNESCO Report:

	Language/Dialect	Spoken Mainly in
1.	**Aimol**	Manipur
2.	**Aka**	Manipur
3.	**Baghati**	Himachal Pradesh
4.	**Bangani**	Uttarakhand
5.	**Bellari**	Karnataka
6.	**Birhor**	Jharkhand
7.	**Gadaba**	Andhra Pradesh
8.	**Great Andamanese**	Andaman & Nicobar Islands
9.	**Handuri**	Himachal Pradesh
10.	**Jarawa**	Andaman & Nicobar Islands
11.	**Koireng**	Manipur
12.	**Koraga**	Karnataka
13.	**Kota**	Tamil Nadu
14.	**Kuruba**	Karnataka
15.	**Lamgang**	Manipur
16.	**Lamongse**	Andaman & Nicobar Islands
17.	**Langrong**	Manipur
18.	**Luro**	Andaman & Nicobar Islands
19.	**Manda**	Odisha

	Language/Dialect	Spoken Mainly in
20.	Mra	Arunachal Pradesh
21.	Muot	Andaman & Nicobar Islands
22.	Na	Arunachal Pradesh
23.	Naiki	Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh
24.	Nihali	Maharashtra
25.	Onge	Andaman & Nicobar Islands
26.	Pangvali	Himachal Pradesh
27.	Parji	Odisha
28.	Pengo	Odisha
29.	Pu	Andaman & Nicobar Islands
30.	Purum	Manipur
31.	Ruga	Meghalaya
32.	Sanenyo	Andaman & Nicobar Islands
33.	Sentilese	Andaman & Nicobar Islands
34.	Shompen	Andaman & Nicobar Islands
35.	Sirmaudi	Himachal Pradesh
36.	Tai Nora	Assam
37.	Tai Rong	Assam
38.	Takahanyilang	Andaman & Nicobar Islands
39.	Tangam	Arunachal Pradesh
40.	Tarao	Manipur
41.	Toda	Tamil Nadu
42.	Toto	West Bengal

In this regard, the Government of India has initiated a Scheme known as the '**Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages of India**' in 2013. The scheme is monitored by Central Institute of Indian Languages (**CIIL**) located in Mysuru, Karnataka.

In order to preserve the knowledge and our languages in the era of Digital India, GOI through the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in 2016, launched the **Bharatavani Project** (BvP), a knowledge initiative to build a searchable knowledge repository in and about all the languages in India in multimedia (text, audio, video, images) formats through an online portal.

The idea is to make India an Open Knowledge Society in the era of Digital India.

Linguistic Diversity Index

The Linguistic Diversity Index **measures the diversity of languages spoken** in a country. The scale ranges from 0 to 1. While an index of 0 represents no linguistic diversity, meaning that everyone speaks the same language, an index of 1 represents total diversity, meaning that no two people speak the same language. No country has an index value of exactly 0 or 1.

According to **Ethnologue**, the world's most comprehensive catalogue of languages, there are nearly 7,000 languages spoken across the world today. Only a few of these languages (359) are truly global, spoken by millions of people which include Mandarin Chinese, English, Spanish and Hindi. The remaining languages have a much more limited scope, and many are in danger of being lost entirely. Interestingly, 94 percent of the world's population speaks 6 percent of its languages, while 6 percent of the world's population speaks 94 percent of its languages.
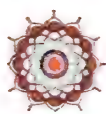
Ancient Scripts of India

A script is also known as a **writing system or orthography**. It is a standard for representing the parts of a spoken language by making specific marks on a medium (paper, rocks, birch-bark, etc.). The two ancient scripts in India comprise *the Brahmi script and the Kharosthi script*.

Most of the ancient and modern scripts in India are developed from the Brahmi script be it Devanagari, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Odia, Assamese, Bengali, etc. Hence, it can very much be maintained that Brahmi is the mother of scripts.

However, Urdu is written in a script derived from Arabic, and a few minor languages, such as Santhali, use independent scripts.

Let us discuss them in brief.

Indus Script

The Indus Script is a corpus of symbols produced by the Indus Valley Civilisation. Most inscriptions are **extremely short** and it is unclear if these symbols constitute a script used to record a language. The Indus Script is an example of **Boustrophedon style** because it is written from left to right in one line and then continued from right to left in the other line.

Brahmi Script

Brahmi is the **oldest writing system** used in the Indian sub-continent and in Central Asia during the final centuries BC and the early centuries AD. Some believe that Brahmi was derived from a contemporary Semitic Script or perhaps the Indus Script. All surviving Indic Scripts in South East Asia are descendants of Brahmi.
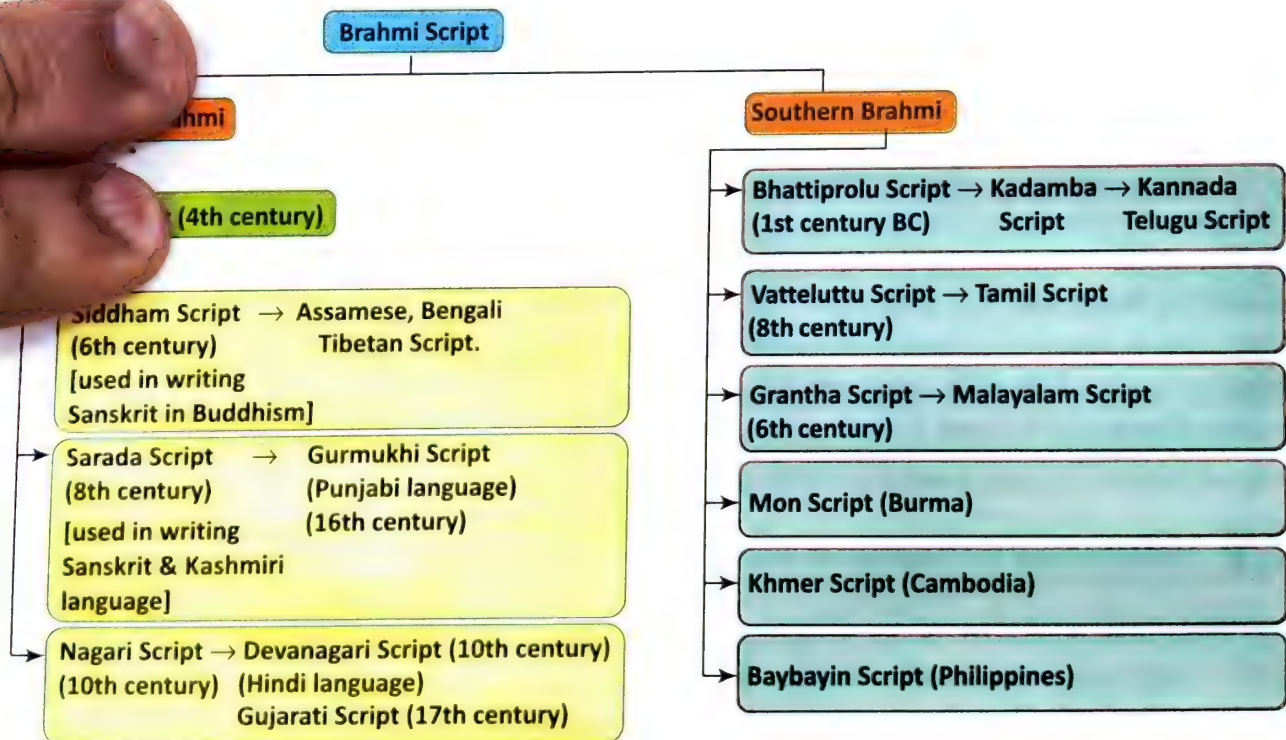
The best-known Brahmi inscriptions are the **rock-cut edicts of Ashoka** in North-Central India, dated 250–232 BC. The script was **deciphered in 1837 by James Prinsep**.

Brahmi Script on Ashokan Pillar

Brahmi is usually written from **left to right** and is an **abugida**, meaning that each unit is based on a consonant and the vowel notation is secondary, except when the vowels commence a word.

Descendants of the Brahmi Script are as follows:

Brahmi Script

...hmi

Southern Brahmi

... (4th century)

**Bhattiprolu Script → Kadamba → Kannada
(1st century BC)   Script   Telugu Script**

Siddham Script → Assamese, Bengali
(6th century)   Tibetan Script.
[used in writing
Sanskrit in Buddhism]

**Vatteluttu Script → Tamil Script
(8th century)**

Sarada Script   →   Gurmukhi Script
(8th century)   (Punjabi language)
[used in writing   (16th century)
Sanskrit & Kashmiri
language]

**Grantha Script → Malayalam Script
(6th century)**

Mon Script (Burma)

Nagari Script → Devanagari Script (10th century)
(10th century) (Hindi language)
                Gujarati Script (17th century)

Khmer Script (Cambodia)

Baybayin Script (Philippines)

The Northern Brahmi Script is a bit angular and the Southern Brahmi Script is more circular.

Gupta Script

It belongs to the Gupta Empire and was used to write **Sanskrit**. The Gupta Script descended from Brahmi and **gave rise to the Nagari, Sarada and Siddham scripts**. These scripts in turn gave rise

to many of the most important scripts of India, including **the Devanagari script, the Gurmukhi script (for the Punjabi language), the Assamese script, the Bengali Script and the Tibetan Script**.
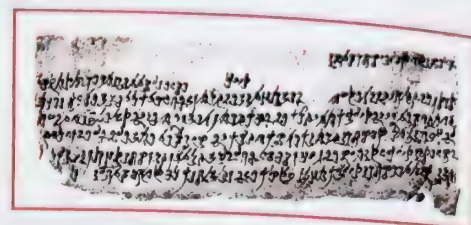
Kharosthi Script

The Kharosthi Script (3rd century BC–3rd century AD) is an ancient script used in ancient **Gandhara** (present day Afghanistan and Pakistan) to write the Gandhari Prakrit and Sanskrit. It is a **sister script of Brahmi** and was also **deciphered again by James Prinsep**. He named it as **Bactrian Pahlavi** because it was found on various Bactrian coins. Bactrian is an extinct Eastern Iranian language formerly spoken in the Central Asian region of Bactria (in present-day Afghanistan). It was the official language of the Kushan empire.

Kharosthi Manuscript

Kharosthi is also an **abugida** like Brahmi. Kharosthi includes a set of numerals that are similar to Roman numerals like I, X, etc.

The Kharosthi script is mostly written **right to left**, but some inscriptions also show the left to right direction of Kharosthi.

Kadamba Script

The Kadamba Script marks the birth of a dedicated script for writing **Kannada**. It is also a descendant of the Brahmi Script which developed during the reign of the Kadamba Dynasty in the **4th–6th century** AD. This script later became **Kannada-Telugu Script**.


Coins of Kadamba King Written in Kadamba Script

Vatteluttu/Vattezhuth Script

The Vatteluttu alphabet is an abugida writing system which originated in **South India**. Developed from Southern Brahmi, Vatteluttu is one of the three main alphabet systems developed to write the **Tamil and Malayalam languages**. The script was used for centuries in inscriptions and manuscripts of South India. Vatteluttu was replaced by the Pallava-Grantha script in the Pallava court.
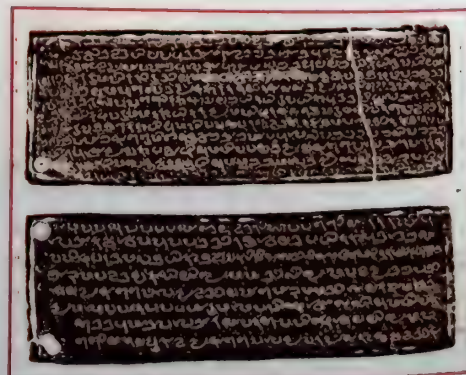

Vatteluttu Script

Grantha Script

The Grantha Script was widely used between the 6th and the 20th century AD by **Tamil speakers in South India**, particularly in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, to write **Sanskrit** and the classical language **Manipravalam**, and is still in restricted use in traditional Vedic schools. It was named Grantha Script as it was used for writing Sanskrit Granthas in early days. The **Malayalam Script is a direct descendant of Grantha**, as are the Tigalari and Sinhala alphabets.
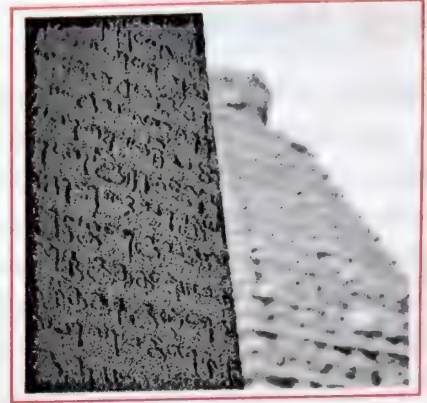
Grantha Script Found at Brihadisvara Temple, Thanjavur

Sarada Script

The Sarada or Sharada Script (named after Goddess Sarada or Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning) is an abugida writing system of the Brahmic family developed around the **8th century** AD. It was used **for writing Sanskrit and Kashmiri**. Originally more widespread, its use became later restricted to Kashmir, and it is now rarely used except by the Kashmiri Pandit Community for ceremonial purposes.
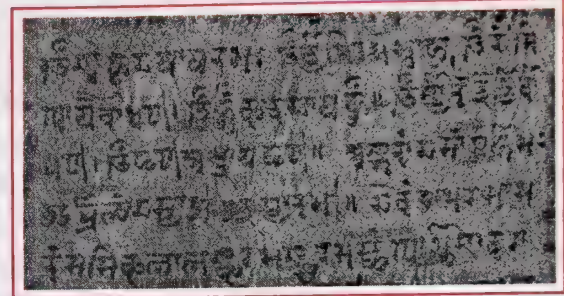
Kashmiri Sarada Manuscript

Gurmukhi Script

Gurmukhi is developed from the Sarada Script and was standardised during the 16th century AD by second Sikh Guru, Guru Angad. The whole of the **Guru Granth Sahib** is written in this script, and it is the script most commonly used by Sikhs and Hindus for writing the Punjabi language. This script has some unique orthographic features, as it was developed outside the ambit of Sanskrit language and related cultural tradition, unlike other scripts.

Devanagari Script

Devanagari is an **abugida** writing system of India and Nepal. It is written from **left to right**. **Devanagari** was developed during 7th century AD from the Eastern variants of the Gupta Script, known as Nagari Script. The **Devanagari** script is composed of 47 primary characters, including 14 vowels and 33 consonants.

The Devanagari Script is used in over 120 languages, including Hindi, Marathi, Nepali, Pali, Konkani, Bodo, Sindhi and Maithili among other languages and dialects, making it the fourth most widely adopted writing system in the world. The Devanagari Script is also used for classical Sanskrit texts.

Modi Script

Modi is a script used to write the **Marathi language**. It was developed in the 14th century AD as a shorthand variant of Devanagari by the scribes who were unable to write down the original Devanagari during rapid writing. Modi was the official script used to write Marathi until the 20th century when the **Balbodh style of the Devanagari Script** was promoted as the standard writing system for Marathi. Although Modi was primarily used for writing Marathi, other languages such as Urdu, Kannada, Gujarati, Hindi and Tamil are also known to have been written in Modi. The Modi script is also an **abugida**.

ॐ ꠏꠝꠡꠤ ꠙꠗꠣ।
ꠐꠍ ꠙꠞꠔꠤꠙꠣꠒꠣ।
ꠎꠐ ꠎꠐ ꠡꠎꠐꠙꠗꠣ।
ꠙꠔꠝꠡꠙꠣ॥

Modi Manuscript

Urdu Script

The Urdu Script involves a **right-to-left** style of writing and is used for writing the Urdu language. It is a modification of the Persian alphabet, which is itself a **derivative of the Arabic alphabet**, and has its origins in the **13th century**. It is closely related to the development of the Nastaliq style of the Perso-Arabic Script. The Urdu alphabet has up to 40 distinct letters with no distinct letter cases which is typically written in the calligraphic **Nastaliq script**, whereas Arabic is more commonly written in the Naskh style. The Urdu Script in its extended form is known as the **Shahmukhi Script** and is used for writing other Indo-Aryan languages of North Indian sub-continent, such as **Punjabi** and **Saraiki** as well (Saraiki is spoken in Punjab province of Pakistan).

Thus, we see that Indian literary styles have undergone considerable changes over a long period of time. The spread of Buddhism from India to various countries has also influenced their scripts, especially in Sri Lanka, Tibet and South-East Asia. The advent of Islam in India also caused a change in the Indian writing tradition. However, it remains to be seen how the scripts and languages of a country will survive and evolve in the era of globalisation where English has become a lingua franca.

Nastaliq

Nastaliq, also romanised as Nasta'liq, is one of the main calligraphic hands used to write the Perso-Arabic Script in the Persian and Urdu languages and is the predominant style in Persian calligraphy. It was developed in the land of Persia in the 14th and 15th centuries. Nastaliq remains very widely used in Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and other countries for writing poetry and as a form of art. **Nastaliq** *is among the most fluid calligraphy styles for the Arabic script. It has short verticals with no serifs, and long horizontal strokes.*

Ol Chiki Script

The Ol Chiki Script was created in 1925 by Pandit Raghunath Murmu for writing the **Santali language**. Ol means 'write' and Chiki means 'script'. Unlike most Indic Scripts, Ol Chiki is not an abugida, but is a true alphabet – giving the vowels equal representation with the consonants. The Constitution of India has been translated in the Ol Chiki Script.

Bharati Script

Researchers from IIT Madras have developed a **unified script for nine languages** and have named it the Bharati script. Like the Roman script which is a common script for many European languages, Bharati is a common script for nine Indian languages, and the objective behind its development is to facilitate the reduction of the barriers of communication among the states. The nine languages include Devanagari, Bengali, Gurmukhi, Gujarati, Odia, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Tamil.

Kaithi Script

It is a historical Brahmic script that was used widely in parts of Northern and Eastern India, primarily in the present-day states of **Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand** and **Bihar**. In particular, it was used for writing **legal, administrative and private** records. The script was widely used during the Mughal period.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

* **Indo-Aryan Group of Languages** – the largest language group of India – 74 percent of the Indians speak languages belonging to this group.
* **Asthadhyayi** – the oldest book in Sanskrit grammar – developed by *Panini* in **400 BC**.
* **Apabhramsa** – an umbrella term which means **dialects other than Sanskrit or even Prakrit** – transition from the Middle to Modern Indo-Aryan Group of languages.
* **Dravidian Group** – languages spoken in the southern part of India – **25 percent** of the Indian population is covered under this group.
* **Sino-Tibetan Group** – belongs to the Mongoloid family – stretches to all over the Himalayas, North Bihar, North Bengal, Assam and up to the North-Eastern frontiers of our nation – considered to be older than the Indo-Aryan Languages – referred to as *Kiratas* in the oldest Sanskrit literature – spoken by **0.6 percent** of the Indian population.
* **Article 343 (1)** – of the **Constitution of India** states that 'The official language of the Union Government shall be **Hindi in Devanagari Script**.'

* **Classical Languages in India** – High antiquity of its early texts/recorded history over a period of 1500–2000 years – A body of ancient literature/texts, which is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers – The literary tradition to be original and not borrowed from another speech community – Classical Languages declared until now are: **Tamil – Telugu – Malayalam – Sanskrit – Kannada – Odia**.

* **UNESCO** has been releasing an **Atlas of the World Languages in Danger** since 1996 to identify the languages in danger and to preserve the languages from being extinct – **India has 197 languages** facing danger in all categories – the highest number of languages in danger for any country in the world.

* The **extinct languages of India** are – Ahom, Andro, Rangkas, Sengmai and Tolcha – all from the Himalayan belt.

* **Brahmi Script – oldest writing system** – the best-known Brahmi inscriptions are the **rock-cut edicts of Ashoka – deciphered in 1837 by James Prinsep**.

* **Modi Script** – used to write the **Marathi language** – official script used to write Marathi until the 20th century when the **Balbodh style of the Devanagari Script** was promoted as the standard writing system for Marathi.

* **Nastaliq** – also romanised as Nasta'līq – one of the main calligraphic hands used to write the Perso-Arabic Script in the Persian and Urdu languages. It is the predominant style in Persian calligraphy.

CHAPTER **17**

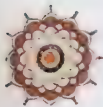# RELIGION IN INDIA
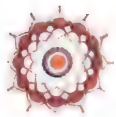
Introduction

The Indian sub-continent has a wide range of religions that define the morality and ethics of the people who follow them. Several communities live together and we have a range of religions. As *Swami Vivekananda* said while addressing an audience at the **World Parliament of Religions** in Chicago in September **1893**:

To access online video related to this chapter, scan this QR code

"I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true."

The spirituality of each religion is vested in the sacred books and physical spaces where people get together to pray. Religion is a very powerful tool in the hands of powerful people, and they can use it to break or make communal ties. India has had more years of religious peace than instances of communal tension.

Constitutional Position of Religion in India

The Constitution of India provides for freedom of conscience and the right of all individuals to freely profess, practice, and propagate religion and mandates a secular State. It requires the State to treat all religions impartially and prohibits any kind of discrimination based on religion.

The major religions presently practised in India are as follows:

Hinduism	Buddhism	Jainism	Islam	Christianity	Sikhism	Zoroastrianism	Judaism

Hinduism

Hinduism is one of the biggest religions in this country but has a variety of cults and sects within its purview. Hinduism is a word that is drawn from **'Hindu'**, which meant people who lived in the **geographical area around the River Indus**. At the most basic level, Hinduism borrows its basic principles from pre-Vedic and Vedic religious philosophies.

Purushartha is a key concept in Hinduism, referring to the *four ultimate goals of human life*. It literally means the **'object of human pursuit'** or **'purpose of human beings'**.

Arranged in order of priority from lowest to highest, the **four purushartha** can be arranged like **Artha** (prosperity and economic values), **Kama** (sensual pleasures), **Dharma** (righteousness and morality) and **Moksha** (liberation from the cycle of birth and death through spiritual realisation).

The four goals of purushartha are believed to be necessary for a happy and fulfilling life. The Hindu philosophy gives precedence to **dharma** over **artha** and **kama**, and **moksha** is viewed as the ultimate aim of human life. These are also the inherent values of the universe.

According to Hindu traditions, *kama* (pleasure) and *artha* (prosperity) are goals to strive for, but after achieving these, one has to look towards attaining *dharma* (righteousness).

In the Upanishads, it is specified that there are four stages in life: **brahmachari** (a celibate student) who then graduates into a **grihastha** (a householder). After more time has elapsed, he becomes a

vanaprastha (a hermit), and in the last stage of life he becomes a *sannyasi* (an ascetic). Once a person becomes an ascetic, the next phase is to strive for the achievement of moksha or salvation.

Hinduism recognises the contribution of innumerable factors, including various forces of nature, environment and other beings, for their support in one's life. To express one's gratitude for such support and to create awareness towards duties and responsibilities, ancient thinkers formulated the concept of **debts (*rinas*)**.

One is in debt to various kinds of one's benefactors, as they facilitate one's life. There are some major debts to show respect towards factors supporting life. These are – *deva rina* (towards Gods and Divine forces), *rishi rina* (debt owed to the past and the present sages and teachers) and *pitra rina* (debt owed to one's ancestors).

Four Sects under Hinduism

* **Vaishnavism:** The followers consider Vishnu as the Supreme Lord. The tradition has traceable roots to the 1st millennium BC, as Bhagavatism, also called Krishnaism. The Vaishnava tradition has many sampradayas or sub-schools.

* **Shaivism:** It considers Shiva as the Supreme Lord. Shaivism traces its origin before Vaishnavism in the 2nd millennium BC in the form of the Vedic deity Rudra.

* **Shaktism:** It considers feminine power and the Devi or goddess as supreme. It is known for its various sub-traditions of Tantra.

* **Smartism:** It is based on the teachings of the Puranas. The followers believe in the domestic worship of five shrines with five deities, all treated as equal: *Shiva, Shakti, Ganesh, Vishnu and Surya*. Smartism accepts two concepts of Brahman, namely Saguna Brahman, the Brahman with attributes and Nirguna Brahman, the Brahman without attributes. Under these four major traditions, there are various sub-sects or **Sampradayas**.

Prominent Sub-sects under Vaishnavism

* **Varkari Panth or Varkari Sampradaya:** The followers in this community are devotees of Lord **Vishnu**, in his manifestation as **Vithoba**, and the worship is centred in Vithoba Temple at **Pandharpur** in **Maharashtra**. The sect strictly abstains from alcohol and tobacco. The annual pilgrimage, **Vari**, involves interesting events. In the Vari, the Varkaris carry the padukas of the saints in palkis from Samadhi to Pandharpur. The events **Ringan** and **Dhava** are held during the pilgrimage. During the Ringan, a sacred horse runs through the rows of pilgrims, who try catching the dust particles kicked off and smear their heads with the same. Prominent figures under this sect include Jnaneshwar (1275–96), Namdev (1270–1350), Eknath (1533–99) and Tukaram (1598–1650).

* **Ramanandi Sampradaya:** The followers adhere to the teachings of the Advaita scholar **Ramananda**. This is the **largest monastic group** within Hinduism, and these Vaishnava monks are known as *Ramanandis, Vairagis or Bairagis*. They **worship Rama**, one of the ten incarnations of Vishnu. These ascetics perform meditation and follow strict ascetic practices,

but they also believe that the grace of god is required to achieve liberation. They are mainly settled around the Gangetic plains. Its two sub-groups are Tyagi and Naga. Saints **Dhanna** and **Pipa** were among the immediate disciples of Ramananda. Hymns written by them find mention in the ***Adi Granth***, holy scripture of the Sikhs. The poet-saint **Tulsidas**, who composed the ***Ramcharitmanas***, belonged to this sect. **Kabir** was also a disciple of Ramananda and part of Ramanandi Sampradaya, although later he founded a separate sect that is now known as the **Kabirpanthi**.

* **Brahma Sampradaya:** It is associated with Lord <u>Vishnu</u>, the Para-Brahma or Universal Creator (not to be confused with the <u>Brahma</u> deity). The founder was **Madhvacharya**. This is based on the **Dvaita Vedanta philosophy** and **Sadh Vaishnavism** propounded by Madhvacharya. <u>Gaudiya Vaishnavism</u>, promoted by **Chaitanya Mahaprabhu** is associated with this sect. **ISKCON** belongs to this sampradaya.

* **Pushtimarg Sampradaya:** It is a <u>Vaishnav sect</u> founded by **Vallabhacharya** around 1500 AD. Its philosophy is that the ultimate truth is one and only one Brahm. The devotion is based on pure love for Lord Krishna. All followers are expected to perform seva to their personal idol of **Krishna**.

* **Nimbarka Sampradaya:** It is also known as the **Hamsa Sampradaya**, **Kumara Sampradaya** or **Sanakadi Sampradāya**, the followers worship Radha and Krishna deities. It was founded by **Nimbarka**, a Telugu Brahmin yogi and philosopher. It is based on the Vaishnava Bhedabheda theology of **Dvaitadvaita (dvaita-advaita)** philosophy, which means **dualistic non-dualism**.

Eminent Sub-sects under Shaivism

Nath Panthi: It is also known as Siddha Siddhanta. The followers adhere to the teachings of **Gorakhnath and Matsyendranath** and worship Adinath, a form of Shiva. They use the technique of **Hatha Yoga** to transform the body to achieve a state of the awakened self's identity with absolute reality. The monks never stay in the same place for long and are a floating group of wanderers. They wear loin cloths and *dhotis* and also smear themselves with ashes and wear their hair in dreadlocks, and when they stop walking, they keep alight a sacred fire called dhuni.

* **Lingayatism:** Also known as *Veershaivism*, it is a distinct Shaivite tradition which believes in **monotheism** through worship centred on Lord <u>Shiva</u> in the form of <u>linga</u>. It **rejects the authority of the Vedas and the caste system.** The tradition was established in the 12th century AD by <u>Basava (a Kannada poet)</u>.

* **Dashanami Sanyasis:** They are associated with the **Advaita Vedanta tradition** and are the disciples of Adi Shankaracharya. They are called 'Dash Nam Sanyasi' as they are further divided into 10 groups.

* **Aghoris:** They are the devotees of <u>Shiva manifested</u> as **Bhairava** and are <u>monists</u> who seek salvation from the cycle of <u>re-incarnation</u> through **sadhana** in cremation grounds and the removal of bonds from their lives, for example, sensual pleasure, anger, greed, obsession, fear and hatred. They indulge in extreme <u>tamasic</u> ritual practices. They are the only surviving sect derived from the **Kapalika** tradition, a *Tantric, non-Puranic form of Shaivism*, which originated in Medieval India between the 7th and 8th centuries AD.

❋ **Siddhars or Siddhas**: Siddhars were saints, doctors, alchemists and mystics all in one from **Tamil Nadu**. They attain spiritual perfection through special secret **rasayanas** to perfect their bodies, in order to be able to sustain prolonged meditation along with a form of <u>pranayama</u> which considerably reduces the number of breaths they take. Siddhars were said to have eight special powers. They are also believed to be the founders of **Varmam**, which is both a martial art for <u>self-defence</u> and a medical treatment at the same time.

Other Prominent Hindu Movements/Schools related to Vaishnavism/Shaivism

- **Pancharatra:** Pancharatra was a Hindu religious movement, and the doctrine was systematised by **Shandilya**. It originated in the late 3rd century BC. Their members **worshipped Narayana** and various avatars of Vishnu. It later merged with the Bhagavata tradition, and thereafter, Vaishnavism developed.

- **Tantrism:** It was a movement within Hinduism and Buddhism, and it emphasised magic rituals and mysticism. It developed in India from the 1st millennium AD. Vajrayana traditions of Buddhism include tantric ideas and practices. The Brahmanas also adopted tantric rituals. Moreover, Jainism was also significantly infiltrated by Tantrism.

- **Pashupata Shaivism:** It is the oldest of the major Shaivite schools, and its philosophy was systematised by Nakulisa in the 2nd century AD. The main texts of the school are *Pasupatasutra* and *Gaṇakarika*. It was a devotional (bhakti) and ascetic movement.

- **Kashmiri Shaivism (or Traika Shaivism):** Shaivism in Kashmir was developed after the 8th century AD and it flourished all over India. Shiva Sutras and its commentary Spanda Karikas were written by Vasugupta. They are the important text of Kashmiri Shaivism. **Pratyabhijna** is the monistic and theistic school of philosophy which was originated in Kashmiri Shaivism.

Other Hindu Traditions

Shrautism: This rare community includes the **ultra-orthodox** Nambudiri Brahmins of Kerala. They follow the 'Purva-Mimamsa' school of philosophy in contrast to Vedanta followed by other Brahmins. They place importance on the performance of Vedic sacrifice (*yajna*). The Nambudiri Brahmins are famous for their preservation of the ancient Somayaga and Agnicayana rituals which have vanished in other parts of India.

In the medieval period, Hinduism underwent a transformation through the **Bhakti movement** in north India, during which several saints translated the Sanskrit texts into vernacular languages and took the message of Bhakti or devotion to the Gods to the masses.

In South India, the **Vaishnavite** movement was very strong, and it reigned until the end of the 13th century. The saints of this movement were called *Alvars* and were devotees of Vishnu, and they sang songs which were collected and compiled into the *prabandhas*. The hymns of the **Alvars** were made into a consolidated volume known as **Divya Prabandha**. There were 12 Tamil saint poets known as **Alvars**, of whom **Andal** was a female saint poet. Another powerful group in the South comprised the **Shaivites** or those who worshipped **Shiva**. Their saints were called **'Nayanars'**, who were a group of 63 saints. Nambiyandar Nambi, who was a priest of Raja Raja Chola I, compiled the hymns of Nayanars into a series of volumes called the **Tirumurai**.

In the modern period, there was a need to change the highly ritualistic nature of Hinduism. Many problems, such as the domination of *Brahmans* and regressive practices such as *sati* and *child marriage*, had crept into Hinduism. Moreover, the caste system led to large-scale discrimination. After the coming of the British and Western ideals of equality, several thinkers were propelled to change the situation, and they started movements to curb these social evils. Some of the important institutions were Brahma Samaj and Arya Samaj, and the Ramakrishna Movement founded by Swami Vivekananda.

Shramana Schools

The word Shramana means **one who performs act of austerity and ascetic** for a noble or religious cause. It refers to several Indian religious movements parallel to Vedic religion.

The various Shramana schools include the following:

1. Jainism (*discussed in Chapter 19*)
2. Buddhism (*discussed in Chapter 19*)
3. a
4. a
5. Charvaka (*discussed in Chapter 21*)

All five schools mentioned above belong to the **Nastika or heterodox school** of philosophy.

Ajivikas

* The school was founded by **Makkhali Gosala** in the **5th century BC**.
* The school revolves around the **Niyati (fate) doctrine** of absolute determinism. It believes that there is **no free will** and that whatever has happened, is happening or will happen is entirely pre-ordained or **pre-decided** and based on cosmic principles. Hence there was **no use for karma**.
* It is based on the **theory of atoms** and believes that everything is composed of atoms and the various qualities emerge from the aggregates of atoms which is pre-determined.
* The Ajivikas led a simple ascetic life, **without clothes** and any material possession.
* They **opposed Buddhism and Jainism** and were **atheists**.
* They did not believe in the doctrine of karma unlike the followers of Jainism and Buddhism. They **consider karma to be a fallacy**.

* They also **rejected the authority of the Vedas**, just like the followers of Buddhism and Jainism.
* However, the Ajivikas **believed in the existence of a soul (atman)** in every living being, just like the Jains. They believed in the **existence of a soul in material form,** whereas Jainism propounds a formless soul.
* **Bindusara (4th century BC)** was one of its followers.
* **Savatthi (Shravasti)** in Uttar Pradesh is believed to be the centre of Ajivika.
* The edicts of **Ashoka's seventh pillar** mention the Ajivikas.
* The texts of the Ajivika sect are non-existent at present. This sect has also lost its glamour in the present era.

Ajnanas

* The Ajnana sect believed in **radical scepticism**.
* The school believed that it is **impossible to attain knowledge** about nature. Even if it is possible, it is useless for attaining salvation.
* This school was a **major rival of Jainism and Buddhism**.
* They specialised in refutation and were considered ignorant.
* They believed that **'Ignorance is Best'**.
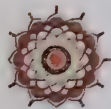
Islam

Islam, which is the 2nd largest religion of the world, originated in the Arabian Peninsula in the **7th century AD** and spread over the world through a large empire. The word 'Islam' connotes **'submission' to God**. Those who submit to God and follow the preaching of Prophet Muhammad are called Muslims. Prophet Muhammad was the last in the long line of messengers sent by God, for example, Abraham and Moses. Both the **Christians** and **Muslims** share **Abraham** as a **common ancestor**. Hence, these are called **Abrahamic Religions**.

The origin of these three religions is associated with the city of Jerusalem. Al-Aqsa Mosque, also known as the **Qibli Mosque in Jerusalem**, is the third most holy place for followers of Islam after Mecca and Medina.

* It is said that an angel revealed the message of God to Prophet Muhammad in the mountains. He recited these injunctions to his followers. Initially, he faced many problems and had to leave his **home in Mecca** and **migrate to Medina (Hijrah)**. After a successful coup, he managed to come back to Mecca. This travel back to Mecca is the **holy route** that became the **Hajj** (holy pilgrimage), and every Muslim has to undertake this pilgrimage **once** in his lifetime.
* After his death, the sayings or day-to-day teachings of Prophet Muhammad were compiled by his followers into the **Hadith**, which is one of the important books of Muslims. In India, there are four major schools of thought and law in Islam: **Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki** and **Hanbali**.

* The basic tenets of Islam are that there is only **one Allah** (manifestation of god) and that he sent his messenger Prophet Muhammad to help the people on Earth and he is the last prophet.
* The Five Pillars (arkan) are the core beliefs and practices of Islam:
  1. **Shahada (Profession of Faith)** – The central belief of Islam is *'There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God'*.
  2. **Salat (Prayer)** – Muslims pray facing Mecca five times a day.
  3. **Zakat** – Almsgiving.
  4. **Sawn** – Fasting during Ramadan.
  5. **Hajj** – Pilgrimage to Mecca.
* They also believe in the **Day of Judgement** when one's merits and bad deeds will be judged, and one would be sent to hell or heaven accordingly. Muslims should offer **namaz** or prayer five times a day. The Friday prayer is supposed to be in the community mosque, and it is called the **Jummah namaz**. It is necessary for Muslims to keep fast from sunrise to sunset during the month of **Ramzan**, which ends with **Eid** celebrations on the first day of the next month. According to the Prophet, people have to give a portion of their earnings to the needy and the poor. This offering is called **zakat** or charity.
* Although there are various sects in Islam, two major sub-divisions predominate: **Shia** (those who were partisans of Ali) and **Sunni** (those who follow the *Sunnah*). The difference between the two is based on who should be the **successor** to Prophet Muhammad. The Sunnis believed that it should be from those close to the Prophet and who were his initial followers. They chose **Abu Bakr**. On the contrary, the Shias claimed that the Prophet's successor should be from his own blood and supported the claim of **Ali, his son-in-law**.
* Although the **majority** of Muslims in India are **Sunni**, the presence of Shias is made known on Muharram when they re-enact the gruesome death of Imam Hussain (the younger son of Ali). There were some moments in history when the religion went through changes and movements, which affected the shape of Islam in the Indian sub-continent. Some of the major movements are as follows:

Movement	Founder	Reasons
Faraizi Movement (early 19th century)	Haji Shariatullah began the movement. Prominent leaders were Naya Miyan and Dudu Miyan	He called for the return of pure Islam and urged Muslims to perform the obligatory duties of Islam called **Faraiz**. It propounded to give up un-Islamic practices and act upon their duties as Muslims. It also protected the rights of tenants.
Ahmadiyya Movement (late 19th century)	Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, who proclaimed himself as the Mahdi (guide)	It started in Punjab to create a community of people who would uphold true Islamic values.
Tariqah-i-Muhammadiya Movement (19th century)	Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi	It was essentially an **armed movement** against the British to establish a proper Islamic state.
Aligarh Movement (late 19th century)	Sir Syed Ahmad Khan	He propagated **modern education** for the Muslims, which would enable them to work with the British and in turn help them prosper.
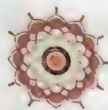
Christianity

Christianity is the most widely practised religion in the world. It is governed by beliefs pertaining to the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, whose life and teachings guide the religion. Christians believe there's **only one God** (i.e., Christians are monotheistic). This Godhead consists of three: the father (God himself), the son (Jesus Christ) and the Holy Spirit. They believe that God sent his messiah Jesus to save the world and that Jesus was crucified on a cross and was **resurrected three days after his death** before ascending to heaven. They contend that Jesus will return to earth again, and the event will be known as the **Second Coming**. The holy book of Christianity is the **Bible** (collection of 66 books which consist of different texts originally written in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic), which includes important scriptures that outline the teachings of Jesus and the lives and teachings of major prophets and disciples, and offer instructions for how Christians should live. The Bible consists of the **Old Testament and the New Testament**. Both Christians and Jews follow the Old Testament, but Christians also embrace the New Testament.

The Old Testament describes the history of the Jewish people, outlines specific laws to follow, details the lives of many prophets and predicts the coming of the Messiah. The New Testament was written after Jesus's death. The first four books of the New Testament – written by *Matthew, Mark, Luke* and *John* – are known as the **'Gospels'**. The word gospel means 'good news'. These texts provide accounts of the life and death of Jesus. Letters written by early Christian leaders, which are known as **'epistles'**, make up a large part of the New Testament. These letters offer instructions for how the church should operate. The ***Acts of the Apostles*** is a book in the New Testament that gives an account of the apostles' ministry after Jesus's death. The final book in the New Testament, *Revelation*, describes a vision and an account of prophecies that will occur at the end of the world.

The **cross** is the symbol of Christianity. According to the New Testament, Jesus was born to a young Jewish virgin named Mary in the town of **Bethlehem** in the West Bank, south of Jerusalem. Scriptures reveal that he grew up in Nazareth, that he and his family fled persecution from King Herod and moved to Egypt and that his 'earthly' father, Joseph, was a carpenter. Jesus used parables (short stories with hidden messages) in his teachings.

Early Christians were persecuted for their faith by both Jewish and Roman leaders. However, when Roman Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity in the early 4th century AD, religious tolerance shifted in the Roman Empire.

As of now, Christianity is broadly split into three branches: **Catholic, Protestant and (Eastern) Orthodox**. The Catholic branch is governed by the Pope and Catholic bishops around the world. The Orthodox (or Eastern Orthodox) is split into independent units, each governed by a Holy Synod, and there is no central governing structure. **Within the Protestants**, there are numerous denominations, many of which differ in their interpretation of the Bible and understanding of the church. Some of the many denominations include

the following: Baptist, Episcopalian, Evangelist, Methodist, Assemblies of God, Seventh-day Adventist and Anglican.

As per the written records of the Saint Thomas Christians, also known as Syrian Christians of India, Christianity was introduced in the Indian subcontinent by **Thomas the Apostle** (one of the 12 Apostles of Jesus Christ), who sailed to the Malabar region in the present-day Kerala in 52 AD.

Later during the British rule, mostly in the 19th century, the Christian missionaries played an important role in the proliferation of education and the growth of vernacular languages in India.

Christianity is **India's third-largest religion** after Hinduism and Islam and is followed by around 3 crore people. **The majority of Indian Christians are Roman Catholics** followed by Protestants. Statewise, the majority of Christians are in Kerala. In terms of percentage, the states with a Christian majority are Nagaland at 87.9%, Mizoram at 87.2% and then Meghalaya at 74.6%.

Society of Jesus

Also known as **the Jesuits**, it is a religious order of the **Roman Catholic Church** headquartered in **Rome**. It was founded in 1540 by **Ignatius of Loyola** (a Spanish soldier) and his six companions with the approval of Pope Paul III. The society is noted for its **educational, missionary and charitable works** in a large number of countries. Jesuits are sometimes referred as 'God's soldiers', 'God's marines' or 'the Company'.

Sikhism

The history of Sikhism commences with the life, times and teachings of Guru Nanak (1469–1539). He was a **non-conformist** with a different vision. He offered an organised opposition to Hinduism. He not only critiqued the existing life of the people of Punjab but also offered his followers with an alternative way of socio-religious organisation. He regulated the community life of his followers by bringing in congregational worship and dining together in a *dharamsala* as a means of bringing people together. Sikhism is also known as **Sikhi**, which means 'disciple' or 'seeker'.

* Guru Nanak did not merely denounce or condemn the existing **social order**, but he gave an alternative to it. For him, the **supreme purpose** of human existence was **salvation**, which can be attained by getting relieved from the endless cycles of birth and rebirth. This salvation was a prerogative of all humankind irrespective of birth, creed, caste and sex. This salvation could not be achieved by worshipping idols or the book as mediated by the pandits and the mawlawis. Nor could it be achieved through renunciation of one's worldly possessions and of one's home.

It could be achieved by **right belief**, **right worship** and **right conduct**, which are all taught by the guru. He developed new forms of worship, such as the practice of serving food to all in the community kitchen (*langar*).

❋ Guru Nanak's religion is a very practical one; Sikhism does **not** ask for asceticism or leaving the household and comforts as a means to achieve salvation. On the contrary, it asks for the practitioner to live like an ideal man who runs his household on the basis of his own labour and attends the *sangat* (community gatherings) and *kirtan* (community singing of songs for praising god) at the *gurudwara* or *dharamsala*, which became the basic places of worship.

❋ One of his main couplets is '*they who eat the fruit of their labour, Nanak, recognise the right way*'. Followers are supposed to get closer to God without disrupting their livelihood. This feature seemed to be one of the major attractions for the **khattari traders** and the merchant class, who were one of the major followers in the initial phase.

❋ One important aspect of Sikhism is the tradition of Gurus. Sikh Gurus were divine spiritual messengers or masters, over a period of 239 years from 1469 to 1708. These teachers were enlightened souls whose main purpose in life was the spiritual and moral well-being of the masses.

❖ **Guru Angad** invented and introduced the **Gurmukhi script** (written form of Punjabi).

❖ Guru **Arjan Dev** compiled the **Adi Granth Sahib**.

❋ Initially Mughal–Sikh relations were very cordial, but the execution of **Guru Arjan Dev** on Jahangir's orders became a cause of dispute. Scholars such as Khushwant Singh looked at this incident as the 'First Martyrdom of the Sikhs'. Guru Hargobind (1595–1644) set a trend of militancy and organised an army of his own at Ramdaspur to offer resistance. The Guru transformed the Sikh CULT into the Sikh CORPS, in which the adherents would act as the 'saint soldiers' or 'soldier saints' who would attain heaven.

❋ **Guru Hargobind** was the first to gird the two swords as the symbol for Sikhs which symbolised the spiritual (*piri*) and temporal (*miri*) authority and represented the combination of *bhakti* and *shakti*. He constructed the **Akal Takht** and Lohagarh Fort as symbols of his temporal authority, to conduct daily business and act as a defence.

❋ The next two gurus, **Guru Har Rai** and **Guru Har Krishan**, were in constant conflict and were eventually detained by Aurangzeb. **Guru Tegh Bahadur** was for establishing the sovereign authority of the Sikhs in the dominions. He too was in conflict with the Mughal emperor **Aurangzeb** and was put to death in 1675 in Delhi.

❋ The last physical guru was **Guru Gobind Singh** after whose death the system of **'personal guruship'** came to an end and the authority of the Gurus was transferred to **Guru Granth** and Guru Panth. This was done because in skirmishes against the Mughals and the hill chiefs, Guru Gobind Singh lost his four sons, and the line of succession therefore ended with him. Just before his death, he transferred the authority to take decisions for the Sikhs to the **Guru Granth Sahib/Adi Granth**, which was the *bani* of the Sikh saints and, hence, had their moral backing.

❋ Guru Gobind Singh founded the Sikh warrior community **Khalsha,** who were markedly different from the non-Khalsa Sikhs, who came to be called Sahajdhari Sikhs. They constituted

the Nanakpanthis, the Bhallas and the Udasis. These were the groups who followed the authority of either the words of Nanak or were followers of the alternative authority holders of the Sikh religion, which was apart from the guru tradition. The *panj pyare* (five beloved ones), who were the first five initiates, were asked by Guru Gobind Singh to initiate, the Khalsa in 1699.

* The baptised Sikh men were called **'Singh'**, and the women were called **'Kaur'**. By adopting a uniform dress code to display a similar external appearance, they achieved a level of uniformity. The Khalsa Sikhs were not allowed to cut their hair, and the men had to wear the **five k's** (*kachcha, kesh, kangha, kirpan,* and *kara*). This kind of differentiation at a very physical level made the followers stand out from their co-religionists. **Sahajdhari Sikhs** are a sub-group within Sikhism. A Sahajdhari Sikh adheres to the principles of Sikhism and the teachings of the Sikh gurus, but may not wear all of the Five Symbols of Sikhism. For example, Sahajdhari Sikhs often wear a *kara* (bangle/bracelet), but many of them cut their hair (*kesh*).

* In Sikhism, God is **One Universal Entity, the creator, self-illuminated, perpetual and gender-less.** He is referred to in the Sikh Scriptures by many names.

Some of the popular names for God are:

❖ **Waheguru** meaning Wonderful Teacher, this name is considered the greatest among Sikhs, and it is known as 'Gurmantar', the Guru's Word;

❖ **Akal Purakh** meaning Timeless Primal Being;

❖ **Ek Onkar** meaning One Creator;

❖ **Satnam** meaning True Name.

The Three Pillars of Sikhism: Three pillars of Sikhism are three basic guidelines for Sikhs given by Guru Nanak which are:

1. **Naam Japna** (focus on God),
2. **Kirat Karni** (honest living) and
3. **Vand Chakna** (sharing with others).

Zoroastrianism

This religion has its origin in Persia and was founded by the prophet **Zarathustra** around the **7th century BC**. It is a monotheistic religion which believes in **one eternal god** named **Ahura Mazda,** who is the epitome of just behaviour and goodness. There is an opposing spirit of evil and bad behaviour called **Angra Mainyu**. These two forces keep fighting with each other in an eternal struggle, and one day good will win over evil, and that will be the last day.

* The first contact of the Zoroastrians with **India** was probably between the 8th and 10th century AD, when they fled from Iran because of the Islamic invasions. They are commonly known as **Parsis** and **Iranis** and are presently among the smallest (and most rapidly shrinking) communities in India. They live mostly in Mumbai, Goa and Ahmedabad.

* In India, the **Iranis** are a smaller Zoroastrian community than the **Parsis** and are recent arrivals compared to the Parsis.

Their sacred text called the **Zend Avesta** is written in Old Avestan and consists of 17 sacred songs **(gathas)** and the **Ahuna Vairyo** (sacred chant), which was supposedly written by Zarathustra himself. The translations of these texts and compiled glossaries are called **Zend**. This collection is divided into **five parts**:

* *Yasna*: describes worship through ceremony and offerings
* *Vendidad*: describes laws against the demons or evil spirits
* *Yashts*: contains hymns of worship through praise
* *Khordeh Avesta*: book of common prayers, meaning 'Little' or 'Small' Avesta
* *Gathas*: These are a part of the **Yasna texts** and are further divided into five parts called the *Ahunavaiti, Ushtavaiti, Spenta-mainyu, Vohu-khshathra* and *Vahishtoishti*.

They **worship fire** and consider *fire* and *earth* to be sacred elements. They believe that dead matter is a corrupting element to everything, and hence, they place their **dead bodies in the open** to be eaten by vultures. These open spaces are called **'dakhma'** or tower of silence, and the vultures that eat them are called **'Dakhma-Nashini'**. The only space in India where they are left are the **'Tower of Silence'** in Mumbai. Nowadays, people have even started burying their dead due to Indian vulture crisis which has led to slower decomposition of bodies.

Tower of Silence, Mumbai

Their **fire temples** called **Atash Behram** are rare, and only **eight** known temples exist in the entire country (details given in Chapter 1).

There are **three major calendar** forms used by the Parsis:

Shahenshahi (majority)	Uses the coronation of the last Sasanian king, Yazdegerd III as the first year for dating the calendar.
Qadimi	Claimed to be the oldest calendar of the three.
Fasli	Claimed to be the most accurate religious calendar and the most recent of the three.

Qissa-I Sanjan

It is an account of the migration of the Zoroastrians (Parsis) and their settlement in the Indian sub-continent. Its first chapter ends with the establishment of the fire temple at Sanjan (Gujarat).

Judaism

It is one of the oldest religions in the world. This is a monotheistic religion that believes in **one God**. The religion **predates** Christianity and Islam; in fact, these two religions have borrowed a lot from Judaic philosophies. The followers of Judaism are called **Jews**. They have been persecuted over the centuries by several empires. The worst case of persecution was by **Hitler,** who systematically killed and tortured several million **Jews** in Germany and other parts of Europe.

* The Jews believe in **Yahweh** or the one true God who was instituted by **Abraham**.
* **Halakhah** is the totality of laws and ordinances in Judaism that have evolved since biblical times to regulate religious observances, the daily life and conduct of the Jewish people.
* Their religious book is called the **Torah**, which is also the first five books of the larger text **Tanakh**. Apart from these, another set of compilations of legal and ethical writings and a brief history of Jewish history is called the **Talmud**. They have separate prayer halls called **synagogues** (places of worship). They follow religious services called the *Eliyahu-hanavi* or the thanksgiving to Elijah the Prophet.
* Abraham was the ancestor of all Jews and propounded that those who followed the injunctions of God would be blessed. His son **Isaac** and grandson **Jacob** (also called Israel) were also blessed by God. God sent **Moses** to Earth and on Mount Sinai gave him the **Ten Commandments** or the *Sefer Torah,* which clarified how the **Israelites** (a term used for Jews who were the children of Jacob or Israel) should live. Jacob had 12 sons who became the ancestors of the 12 tribes referred to as the **'Tribes of Israel'**.
* During prayers, all male Jews have to wear a *tsisith* or prayer shawl. The Jews also believe in the **Day of Judgement** when the Messiah would escort the pious to heaven and evildoers would be relegated to hell.

The first Jewish settlers came to the western coast of India, and although they are numerically small, there are five major Jewish communities in India:

1. The Malayalam-speaking **Cochin Jews**
2. The Marathi-speaking **Bene Israel Jews**
3. **Baghdadi Jews** who came from West Asia as traders and settled mainly around Surat. They can be found at present mainly in Mumbai and Kolkata.
4. The fourth group is the **Bnei Menashe**. They have created genealogies to the Menashe or Menasseh tribe, which was one of the 10 lost tribes of Israel. They live on the border of India and Myanmar in **Manipur and Mizoram**, and they claim that they were enslaved and sold to the Assyrians and managed to escape to China from where they came and settled on the border of India. They call themselves the **'Children of Menasseh'**. The Bnei Menashe comprise the **Mizo, Kuki and Chin tribes**.
5. The last among them is the **Bene Ephraim**, which is a small group of Telugu-speaking Jews who converted to Judaism in the 1990s.

The **largest** Jewish Community in India is the **Bene Israel**.

Prominent Synagogues in India

Name	Located at	Affiliated to
Magen David Synagogue	Kolkata	Baghdadi Jews
Paradesi Synagogue	Cochin	Cochin Jews
Ohel David Synagogue (Largest in India and also called Lal Deval)	Pune	Baghdadi Jews
Knesset Eliyahoo Orthodox Synagogue	Mumbai	Baghdadi Jews
Nariman House	Mumbai	It was one of the targets of the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks.

Other Prominent Religions in India

- **Sanamahism:** It is a religion followed mainly by the **Meitei people** who generally belong to **Manipur**. Sanamahism involves **shaman-type worship** of ancestors, the almighty god, the sky, the elements and the forest. Under Sanamahism, people pray various deities and each deity is ascribed to a different aspect. The sacred text of Sanamahism is the **Puya**. Its associated festival is **Lai Haraoba**, representing worship of traditional deities and ancestors. Lainingthou Sanamahi is a **household deity** and is generally kept in the **south-western corner** of the house. This religion is not considered a part of Hinduism.

- **Ayyavazhi:** It is considered to be a **part of the Hindu religion** and followed in **South India** (especially Tamil Nadu and Kerala). The religion is centred on the life and preachings of **Ayya Vaikundar**, and the related holy texts are the *Akilathirattu Ammanai* and *Arul Nool*. Ayya Vaikunda Avataram (i.e., the day of Vaikundar's incarnation) is declared a **state holiday** in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. At the worship centres, instead of placing a deity in the sanctum sanctorum, a compiled structure of flame-shaped copper, a saffron cloth and separate garlands made of rudraksha and flowers are placed to signify a formless god called **Elunetru**.

- **Sarnaism:** It is an indigenous religion of the **tribal communities** (Munda, Ho, Bhumij, Santal, Baiga and Khuruk) of *Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh*. The religion is centred on the **worship of nature** represented by trees (e.g. sal trees). Sarna temples are called **Jahir Than**. This religion is also known as Adi Dharam. The holy grail of the faith is **'Jal, Jungle, Zameen'** and its followers pray to the trees and hills while believing in protecting the forest areas. **Jharkhand** government passed a resolution to recognise **Sarna** religion and include it as a separate code in the Census of 2021.

- **Bahai Faith:** The origins of this religion can be traced to **Persia** in the **19th century**. Its founder **Bahaullah** announced that he was one of God's prophets. As per the Bahai Faith, God is considered single and all-powerful. The religion emphasises the goal of a unified world order to ensure prosperity of all nations, races, creeds and classes. It revolves around three central principles: **the unity of God, the unity of religion,** and **the unity of humanity.** The **Lotus Temple in Delhi** belongs to the Bahai Faith. A year under the Bahai calendar consists of 19 months (each having 19 days). Bahai is considered as one of the fastest growing religions in the world.

Lotus Temple, Delhi

APTER SUMMARY

* **Vaishnavism** – considers Vishnu as the Supreme Lord – has traceable roots to the 1st millennium BC.

* **Shaivism** – considers Shiva as the Supreme Lord – it originated before Vaishnavism in the 2nd millennium BC in the form of the Vedic deity Rudra.

* **Shaktism** – considers the Devi or goddess as supreme – known for sub-traditions of Tantra.

* **Smartism** – based on the teachings of the Puranas – treated the following as equals: Shiva, Shakti, Ganesh, Vishnu and Surya.

* **Shramana** – means one who performs acts of austerity or is an ascetic – various Shramana schools include Jainism, Buddhism, Ajivika, Ajnana and Charvaka.

* **Ajivika** – founded by Makkhali Gosala – in the 5th century BC – believes that there is no free will – no use for Karma – opposed Buddhism and Jainism – rejected the authority of the Vedas – believed in the existence of the soul – believed in the existence of the soul in material form.

* **Ajnana** – radical scepticism – impossible to attain knowledge about nature – Ignorance is best.

* **Islam** – originated in the Arabian Peninsula in the 7th century AD – connotes 'submission' to God – Christians and Muslims share Abraham as a common ancestor – teachings of Prophet Muhammad were compiled by his followers into the Hadith.

* **Christianity** – based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ – basic philosophy of Christianity is the existence of one God – sacred text of the Christians is the Bible – consists of the Old Testament and the New Testament.

* **Sikhism** – commences with the life, times and teachings of Guru Nanak – supreme purpose of human existence was salvation – achieved by right belief, right worship and right conduct – Guru Hargobind was the first to wear two swords as a symbol for Sikhism – Guru Gobind Singh founded the Sikh warrior community Khalsa.

* **Zoroastrianism** – originated in Persia and was founded by the prophet Zarathustra around the 7th century BC – monotheistic religion whose followers believe in one eternal god Ahura Mazda – the followers worship fire.

* **Judaism** – followers are called Jews – believe in Yahweh or the one true God who revealed himself to Abraham – believe in the Day of Judgement.